Cenacle

Number 60 • December 2006

All we are saying...
is give peace a chance.

—JOHN LENNON, 1969.

December 10, 2006
6:09 p.m.
Cosi Restaurant - 3rd & Pine
Seattle, WA.

Dear Jade,

I don't think I've written you a pen-&-ink letter before though we're known each other years at a long distance. That said, I've thought about it & easily decided that letters stick in ways that electronic mail doesn't.

Downtown Seattle pretty steam with holiday lights, on one store a great star perches, there are several large trees festively illumined, & here & there are Santa Claus presences. How is Israel during December, the cities? In the U.S. we mostly hear of Israel in terms of war, peace, religions, death - little about its daily life, between bombs & bullets, so to speak—

I've been thinking about Art & faith lately, which leads this letter in your direction, since you are one

of the legitimate Artists I'm lucky enough to know—

Art & faith - not religious faith per se, but more what embeds in an individual's art, fuels the engine, the spark to the drive—

I've asked myself: what do I believe in? What ground does my work root in presently? It's a complex question, for I think of my work as the clustered heart of all I do - how I live, how I think, my actions look to my work & how it will be affected. It doesn't always work, I don't always do right, but the relationship, perspective, whatever, remains, & what I value outside my own work is of a kind with it. Simple. Art.

That said, not enough ~~remains~~ is yet told to mean much. So, further, look to thoughts on love, society, social conduct, death, origin, destination, reality itself - what of any of it? I believe that one needs working, malleable ideas at least, thoughts if not whole philosophies—

December 11, 2006
2:21 p.m.
Seattle Public Library - 10th fl. Reading Room
Seattle, WA.

- The material world strongly asserts its valid existence & , while it can be conjectured as part of some cosmological apparatus constructed by some deity, or scientic principle, I maintain none, no new or old theory, explains all. More seems like there is in each a careful emphasis, a tone with instructions & commandments. Fertility, individual dignity, ego humbling, aesthetic genius — none explains all.

For a long time I felt that Art was source, that one could look to the Universe's imperative to make & make as a clue to purpose & destiny. But Art does not explain some things any more than Christianity or capitalism or pagan worship or the scientific method. Art roots deep in me, fills my hours deeply & wonderfully but does not undo my pain, nor explain my mortality, nor help me understand the

indifference among live beings I witness every single day. I've learned that what I align with does not equal final, complete truth. Not wrong, but not, uniquely & in total, right.

Good & evil. Both evident everywhere & at all times yet what they are changes, & changes again. The Iraq War, so hardly long ago, was adjudged by millions to be just, purposeful. Now it's seen as unimaginable folly, the horror of brute men's wills visited upon thousands of innocents. What changed? The mission was never defined so how can it now be rejected? Hardly more truth is available about it now than then. We who opposed it have never changed our reasons.

Human truth is clay & I distrust it. I do not look to men for the answers I wish for. Yet: where else? Observe Nature all you will & still not know it. Pattern & habit do not sum to answer. Substance & species observed & named, defined by a list of characteristics, remain elusive & unknowable. The heart of Creation beats in mystery, shuts out even the possibility of knowing it exists. If anything exists.

10:42 p.m.
Home-couch
Seattle, WA.

-Nothing seems to explain anything—or, as I put it to myself optimistically, everything explains everything. But no comfort in this, little guide. I see people every day, near & far, jostle & shove, acknowledge no kinship by their actions, no common blood or racial tie. It angers & frustrates me, & I fall into the habit of giving indifference same as I get it. A sickness, one could call it, modern times, etc. But, I wonder, is any kind of possible action demonstrably wrong when no definitive purpose has been set out? We feel an impulse toward kindness, generosity, toward asserting the dignity & autonomy of our fellow men & women, if not all creatures in the world. And yet... and yet... what don't we know? What facts & would crack open our world's strange truths?

One guesses. One uses experience, & instinct, & the luck available, & guesses. Right can come down to a bowl, a bed, a warm companion near, a purpose, some sense of hope. One guesses among these things, sums what is & guesses toward what will be. Maybe no more. I'm not convinced, if ever I was, that an answer ever comes. This does not mean I lack a sense of ~~[illegible]~~ wonder, or simply doubt all I see. Contrary, because I do not know, I wonder all the more. My wish leads me onward, by my pen. It's what I cherish & trust, through these unexplained years.

I hope this letter finds you well, & send my love to Dad & your children. I've enjoyed composing these pages soon bound for for your mailbox. The hour is late. Bed beckons. I'll set from my bowl, my companion awaits.

Huxley, asked at the end of his life, replied to a question regarding making life's value by saying: be a little kinder. Thus the many years summed for him.

12-11-2006

Cenacle
Number 60 • December 2006

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Seattle, Washington

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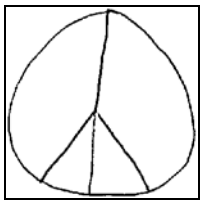
Thank you to my colleagues at GEHC for taking a chance on me a year ago, & I hope finding reasons to be glad you did . . . to people across the United States who in November voted in the millions to change the U.S. Congress out of a hope that life need not be a ongoing murderous crush…and to people around the world who yet believe there are good, determined people in the U.S. who will not let the Empire's iniquitous War go on perpetually . . .

Jim Burke III

Editor's Note: The following is the twenty-fifth in an ongoing series derived from the correspondence between Jim Burke III and myself, begun in 1992, and in the spirit of the more enthused letter-writing tradition of yesteryear.

December 4, 2006
Reservoir #2 (cold)
West Hartford, CT



Dear Ray,

I used to draw the peace symbol with a crack in it because of the Vietnam War. I said to myself that surely after 50,000+ U.S. soldiers dead, countless wounded with injuries that left them maimed for life (if you can call it that—no arms and/or legs, brain injuries, etc.), this country must have surely learned to stay out of other countries' political situations, as horrible (and Saddam is an evil S.O.B.) as they sometimes are. But not this asshole Bush who was elected under questionable moral conditions, decides to invade Iraq for "WMDs," bypasses the U.N. Security Council, and tries to instill democracy in an Islamic religious culture. He wants to change their culture! Did he really think he could accomplish this with a puppet government devoid of religious influence? WHAT A FOOL! WHAT A MORON! His advisors and cohorts, Cheney and Rumsfeld et al., certainly did. Cheney is now the lamest of [vice] ducks and Rummy is gone. Bolton will not be confirmed as a permanent ambassador to the U.N., thanks in a large part to Sen. Dodd's efforts.

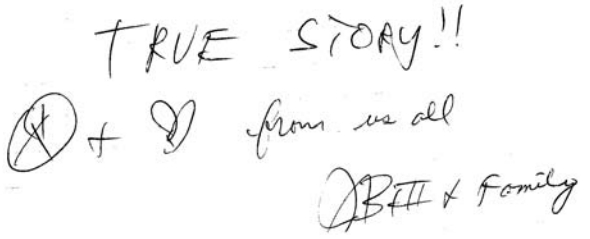
I waited so long to respond to your letter[1], and a great one it is, because I needed to have some hope in me replenished. It was full of hope and when the Dems took control of both houses of Congress, it was like a miracle—a dream come true. I will assume for the moment that when they actually take control in January, the Democrats will **DO SOMETHING. THEY WILL CUT OFF FUNDING TO END THE WAR AND SET A FIRM TIMETABLE FOR WITHDRAWAL!** I have faith and hope, but I need to see it fulfilled. Never again do I want to see this country engaged in a futile action that costs so many American lives. There is no way of knowing how many Iraqis have been killed because of this war by our country and the civil war that has resulted. Some guesstimates are in the hundreds of thousands. Although the new majority leader of the House has stated that impeachment is "off the table," I would be interested if she revisited that statement if a smoking gun were found concerning Bush's actions—i.e. he *knew* (and it could be proved)

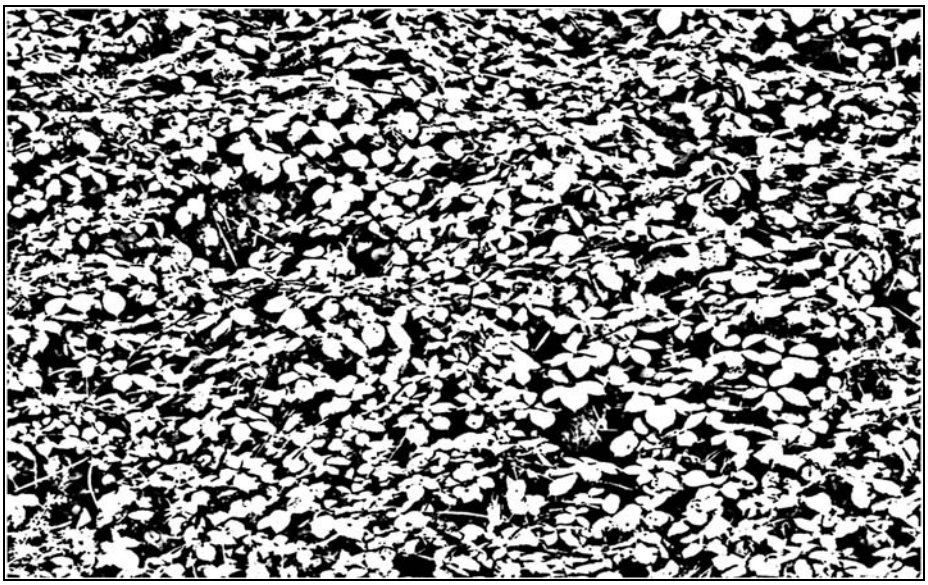
[1] *Cenacle* | 59 | October 2006

that there were no WMDs. I believe that he did know, and deliberately hid the truth from the American people, but I suppose an impeachment would be expecting too much. This asshole tried to suppress the liberties of the people of this country by inventing (as good a word as any) a new department called Homeland Security. This came as close to making the country a quasi-fascist state as any action by any president preceding him. We (especially you and Kassi, Ray) are now on a "terror profile list" of everyone who chooses to fly in this country. All foreign travelers are automatically included on this list (source: Lehrer News Hour, on/about 11/27/06). Your dress, destination, origin, age, financial status, and other "unknown" factors are all taken into consideration to determine the degree of terror activity that is likely by *you and/or your family*. Bush has done so much to increase the likelihood of terrorist activity, and started a civil war in Iraq by his actions, that he should be impeached for these actions alone. I believe that starting a civil war falls under the category of "High Crimes"!

I also believe change is at hand, and another area of hope that surrounds my heart is found in the Supreme Court nominees that Bush saw fit to nominate, if for no other obvious reason than to expedite his own agenda in relieving the American people of their rights as alluded to earlier in this letter. Roberts, especially, realizes what is at stake, and for him to lead a court in reversing the former Supreme Court's landmark decisions would have disastrous effects for this country's economy. All the money that has been spent in Iraq during the last four years can now be used to further the minds of this country's population. This country will be at peace again and one's own life orientation will be accepted as it is. There will be no more judgmental decisions regarding a person's abstract thoughts concerning materialism versus the soul. I know that the esoteric view is not feasible for everyone to contemplate; we are fortunate enough to be enlightened to do so. I also agree that *nobody knows*. As the man said (and yourself), facts do note always reveal the truth. This is because *facts* are based on physical parameters, and these parameters can be constantly altered to suit the desired outcome. Truth predisposes, *a priori*, that facts are immaterial, inconsequential, and irrelevant. *Nobody knows* what the truth is, *but I do know what the truth is not*! The truth is not living in a country where one has to contrive political games to justify an outcome contrary to the whole soul of the population. Bush tried to do this and, as in such cases of all despots, utterly failed. Although his supporters will find it disturbing to admit this, I think they know in their hearts that Bush's time is past. People are going to enjoy life, even if there are still some that want to divide the population of this country into liberals and conservatives. There will be events such as gay bashing and discrimination based on a myriad of factors. I may be too old, too fat, divorced, etc. I also know, however, that I am a happy musician who has enjoyed the challenges of being a single father for the last ten years. Love is Truth is Love is God is Truth. The circle continues unbroken, and now our leaders and representatives in our political structure have an opportunity to make it happen. As John Lennon said: IMAGINE. I guess, Ray, this is what keeps me going. It got to the point when the civil war in Iraq started (I know I predicted this in my "State of the World II" address years ago, but the horror of it makes me puke) that I started to become numb. It was like Bush has accomplished an underhanded, sought after, intentional plan. Your letter rescued me and gave me a large magnitude of hope that I want to sincerely thank you for again. It gave me such a degree of hope that when Bush was resoundingly defeated like the deposed king he is becoming and deserves to be, I resolved to work for the planet, and the stars forever. The hiatus is over. My album will be completed and mailed to you by Christmas (give or take!). And speaking of album . . .

I was fortunate enough to see the WHO twice this go-round. The first time was in Boston and they rocked. They played selections from their new album *Endless Wire*, as well as their classics. The encore was entirely a *Tommy* set, including the technically incredibly difficult "Sparks." The seat was good, off to the side but not too far back off the floor and Towshend played great. The second show was at the Mohegan Sun last Friday. It had been about 2 months since I had seen the first show and, combined with my seating location (first row in a floor section), it even surpassed the *Psychoderelict* concert as the best I have ever seen him play, and Daltry sing. They did the entire *Endless Wire* mini-opera and their encore consisted of a longer version of *Tommy*. Their playing as a whole unit (with Palladino on bass and Zach Starkey (Ringo's boy) on drums) improved tremendously over that time between the two concerts. Of course the second concert had its technical flaws as to balance the yin and yang. Townshend's guitar blew up at one point, and after shaking it as though to re-instill life in it, he shook his head and threw it off the stage. He hurriedly waved on his technician for a replacement and when this guitar also refused compliance, Pete shook his head and chucked this one off stage left. This time, however, he forgot to unplug it first, and several pieces of equipment went with it. The audience loved it, we got to see the Grandmaster throw two guitars, a pre-amp system, and assorted things off the stage—all the while shaking his head. He then had several technicians surrounding him and, after tracking the loose connection, fitted him back to his life-grid and he played on brilliantly—I MEAN HE ZONED OUT!!!





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Raymond Soulard, Jr.

New Songs (for Kassandra)

[continued]

One, Again

What crosses tonight in blood &
metal badges this place in memory.
Call this a lord's training house or
starflight's origins, reck the want
of beast for beast a code's key or
waiting transform, these hours open
with no promise to any creed or creature,
& nay beholden to the land's fattest grasp.

******

Softly

What my heart did not behold &
comfort, forgive me. What the world
leans to teach & I resist, renew me.
What the mystery aims to me in
its blue blossoms & watery glances, try
me again. I will to more, & more, less & less.

******

Ruin

Old songs, new songs, what sings higher
than drums & dust? Why here tonight?
What falls truest through the heart lands,
softly, as Art, but still: Why here tonight?
Home the remain where thoughts cease, its city,
its lover, its patch of green, slice of moon, ask:
Why here tonight? Old gods, new gods, faith a
crooked spasm within, love a mold around the
heart, its poison & cure. Why anywhere tonight?
Faces snap in the fire & neon, faces lean on the tired
carriage, faces bulge the frame, faces ripe dreaming's
wilds. How will I lift the bent & lorn ones when
I've lost how to rise? That's why still here tonight.

******

Remnant

What trio of hours to burn for new light,
tap which bloom within, call for its feathers &
its shake. Nights remembered by nobody.
What to burn. I asked. I offered. It mattered.

******

Remember

Learn nothing from your driving miles &
wet angry hours but this: kindness swathes
many gaps within & love breaches what none else can.

******

Grateful

Another dream of loss, then angling for any
hook, better a shackle & whichever face than
these fields, what they say too bluntly. Wake:
she breathes with me through trouble & hope,
she walks the pines & blooms we call our path.
Grateful on this carriage midst its lorn creatures,
one for every seat.

******

Purpose

What purpose to trick from life
when the heart curls in toward its
memories & darkness? A checkered
child dances in the wind, wide
baskets of succulents, the glare of
crowds & talky avenues. Happiness
a sugar among doomed choices, disease
of desire luring the hungry to cry & crawl.

******

Blues

Call it freedom for an hour's slow stroking
& a shadow's calm explain. Tonight
the lights blink go & slow & no, I ask
for another. Mouth to mouth, thigh
upon thigh, born to breed breeders, suck
one last & die. A sentiment called history.

Call it freedom with a slave's love for tune,
for the wind in a thin skirt, for how
dreams will mock any trembling day, for
the lure of elaborate suffering, is
every pain your own too? Is any? Mouth
to mouth, the late hour's searching blue eye.

Call it freedom if it's pretty & rattles
sense or senses. New pebbles arrive on
shore & each carries first conception
of the sea. Another new one up & shining,
today & today & today. Elsewhere tonight,
going, where the knots loose or reveal.

******

Perfect

Raw climb through brush & shadow,
swathed, embraced, alone, peaking,
each fade sudden or gradual a blink
like the last & the next, thumb, tentacle,
stardust, arriving to the last hour,
next dream, first quest, broadest dawn, final why.

******

Redux

I've learned little more than this:
every flesh & eye tapped ever by
the long ruinous hand of memory.
Try it some olden way, by a pill's
twist or machine's jerk, nothing really
goes away & nothing ever returns.

******

Walking Fair

Bare comfort in careening years but
a lost sugared hour by a thrashing tide,
half slippings into secret knowing. Little,
less & less, then a dear hand freely covers
that wound, the world shifts as it cannot
toward peached light, new music, clearing path.

******

Mortal

Will it come with relief or sadness, with a
yearn for high cypress in winter, for a thousand
thousand bodies wracked with rhyme, hope
that what beholds tells of all gone hard
by, was it truest when it bit or when a
strand licked near a smile & a curled scent of
want opened its petals & naked gave its song?

******

Combust

Life sheers you mysterious,
leaves what left with a question:
what will you do now?

******

Poaching

From the blackness thrust a world & return
awhile, how high it seems, floating among
wings & leaves, kisses up the hours, we watch
our stars, describe our gods, play our miracles,
flesh is pretty & desire twines nutty with hope,
sky awled forever with studying gull &
brazen surf, how high from the blackness,
up with the long-mouthed crowds & their
baudy blue drummers, name that mountain
& show its mapped point, the moon just a
conjure for exotic red nights, how like us,
round like our goblets & babes, high,
higher, take who we will, who we choose,
who believes, bid the symbol a knee & a coin,
known, know, knowing, build with a jaw
aimed toward a dream of centuries hence,
let night's private waters their moment's
rule then bite a dimpled breast & make
another, what flakes not subtlety but weakness,
so high, call it an arc, fade beautifully,
what chasms & caverns not breached not
consequence, breathing, smudgy morning sun,
the alien taste of river water, I remember
everything, but what really happened. Dear ones, what now?

******

Rest

Peace in night's many strange chirps,
chasms of faces passing through taverns,
the clambor toward rest with a heart
ever strange with new & old wants, we
breathe singly & forget unison, we pop
hungry for a tree's waving content, spring nest,
afternoon's sweet mangey sunshine. Want &
want yet better the next chase than fall & wait.

******

Remain

Nothing but petals & cold strums, wishes in
washed posters, watch the land go, watch the
sea go, watch dreams heave, nothing but
slow fingers & slow blue eyes longing, watch
the palace go, the temple & the market,
the world heaves, dreams heave, love heaves. Won't go.

******

Mortal

Call for stars without names, for
a timeless abide with smart, tender,
knowing hands, for the fine awe
given a mile-high trunk, a pink-rimmed
daybreak, for reverence twined with
beat & breath, running music through cascades high & low.

******

Sheer

Toward a want clear of stricting noise,
sniff it pink & high, dream it, take it,
accept it, poison more in old gods' tamp.
Want is mind's yea to flesh, to world,
to like creatures equally trembling
with blood's hot smack, lone cries from each to all.

******

Flesh & Stardust

From the brief spectre of a nameless glance,
what this world? What clapped once, twice,
& bid it be? Lights leaning ever nearer,
the books now an endless glare, printed
noise, gesture & distract, how came that dented
face, that soft empty one, that hurt ever-
asking one? Or find answer with the
swooping creatures for a raw bite & a wordless
fuck & quick cease? Range the mansion &
the mountain & the lightless howling
canyon, find what? Event, reaction, more
hours. Sleek carriages crowd the freeway
& flame the sky. Look! How her lace
to a heavy touch falls. Listen! The fat
dark birds raucous meet the new sun. Wait.
Flesh & stardust: no difference. The music
in our molecules hustle up the making more.
Flesh & stardust: only a fool or a liar preaches
to men alone, won't explain to dogs & gnats.
Flesh & stardust: lights leaning ever nearer,
maybe tonight's dream will crack & needless to return.
Flesh & stardust: while here less to knowing's
ceaseless feed & more to empathy's great push.
Flesh & stardust: swept into one's deepest
blackness, wish for nothing, break what remain.
Flesh & stardust: what this world? Clapped
once, twice, bid it be? To whom its burden, its praise?

******

Faith

Not to cease the song til every creature
his tendering note. Not to cut dream & wake's
plotless cycle until all bear kindness' touch
& follow love's true gesture. Not to let go manacle
nor wing til neither are this one's or that
one's rare path. Among faith & justice a happier call.

******

Nocturnal

Neither lord nor king in this late petalled hour,
not the brutals nor sweet fierces of daylight's straight trade,
what remains, & rules, is her voice. Reck freedom. Reck it hard.

******

Wrack

What fury tonight in old letters, crackling
liquid talk of spiky brothers & pinkcheeked
others, nothing bites like old hunger, how a
year or an hour shone with with softer, swifter
light, what remain? What remain? Stains gone
by, stains to go. Other nights by taller starlight
will reach past again, better explain why.

******

Music for Noone

The night curls around a warm cup &
the sad memories fewer til I notice my
foot's goofy dance to the tune at hand &
there's little left but everything hungry remains.

******

Death Fragment

World prophecies nothing I wish to
know tonight. Blood squirming, another
fist brushes something soft. Barks before
dawn, everyone up, three trucks &
another braindead flash of conquer. We
have learned nothing from our hopes &
fears, from trees, from children. We've invented
good gods to ignore. Carry on—

******

Day Labor

Nothing reveals fully, scummy yellow leaves on
wet trees, pink trinkets in the empty shop, sloppy
day, sloppy heart, sloppy world. Someone gifts me
an explaining word, the bus driver smiles, I scuttle back,
this hour passes with little rise, a little wrack.
What moves us along? Is it memory, hunger's clue?

******

Acoustic

World revealed by its puzzles, answered by
its wonders, found simple in its fragments:
the solution is love, yes, the solution is death,
yes, the solution is conquer, yes, the solution
is God, yes, the chorus twists & magnifies & calls
its ruin of bones civilization. Builds blind anew. Yes.

Then a few tinker & poke at ancient pebbles,
study calcified wings & a telling fracture of spoon.
Dig into smaller spaces, the mathematical wilderness
of atoms, the secret humming tracts of molecules.
Closer? Yes. There? Never. A relativity only by
dance or fire or high song revealed? Yes & yes & yes.

******

Harder

Some nights further than dreaming,
there was soft, open code in the broad
night's flames, translation home simpler
than time's bitch try, the drums cleared every
mind, this was not another tough explain fell by
the easy word god. Every rude flesh vibrated to know.

The skies read the hour's drama & slipped within
the rhythm, moon sleek with pull & pulse,
stars their long message arriving, some nights,
dimensional attraction, the same red cosmic
tangle engulfing all, taste it in the dark

field's clover, how the happy lunatic traces
laser beams into trunks. Some nights voices
broke of their drone, daylight's entice to lean
& seem to know, fell open, the wider cry,
the crossed red moan, behold the ticking
chug in every moving soul, now reck beyond too.

Some nights truer no matter this lean carriage
of hours, worrying tatters, muscles working a climb
over a least bare hill. Behold a year countless
before you woke & wanted, & another remembers
you with a leaning stone. Some nights further
than dreaming, no other ride to reach for, &
many years gone just a prod toward knowing to come.

******

Through

With the years a black sentiment, a lean
back to soft old songs & howling brotherly
nights. Two great tankards smashed in a
blinking street. Called it Art. Collision
of flesh & want, called it love. Now look through
for what remain. Less & more, by fury & release.

******

Want

Strum it once. Now again. Ceaseless in the years,
one hand to the next, great tomes of wood
can't sop it up. Touch begins life, & never lets go.

******

Surrender

to nothing. Again ride dearest hope on
trembling breath & away, look everywhere
now. Calm, calm. Help me, Universe, again,
great noise within, bright & flagrant to sing
as ever, arching with wettest cries, four limbs
smack & many hot reply. Sing me deeper,

strum me elsewhere, new, where long hair
& dreaming vines legislate, where hands know
& touch, true to every hour's pink murmur.
This autumn wind blows stone & the world
twists warm toward mercy & dull toward gain,
feel it in the strumming pour & angry wrinkles

of the slurring beggar, pretty faces in plastic
chatter by. Help me, strum me, teach me
high magick in common spark, surrender,
Universe, to nothing, but breach city's suck
& grind, dreams more with brick's grit & neon
jibber, release without crack, faith with

open hands & eyes, new love over old wrack,
bulb & root of peace over spasming pounce of
conquer, help me, Universe, strum me, stroke
me, whisper what I love & do not know,
what craves me in petals & lures me in sky,
will to live in dearest hope & show others why.

******

Brief Funk

Where night's farthest growl?
Is the hour to heal or to dance?
My hand opens. My heart clenches. Which?

******

Midnight Yawp

I am trying to know with all that
I am. I call this Art & breathing
both. Is there anything else? Love.

Love the remaining corrosion & clue—

******

Glaring

What rare-told revel swoons through common
streets & masking days, what enigma girds
& bears, what clue neither shadow's nor
brute's, streaming lemon dusk rimming
empty pale sky, what finale the old man
saw on his fall that night, what did not
arrive when a branch clipped his demise
but took a good toll of flesh for its mercy?

******

View from the Shore

Wield it finer, that rhythm & muse,
your thorns & lilies hardly sum a life,
hours when sugar dabs your fingers &
the light murmurs, "grace. . . fun. . . miracle,"
hours gnawing at heart's nearest gapes &
night barking, "regret. . . wrong. . . waste. . ."
Wield it finer, *do good now*, rhythm folds
within a moment's gasp, the muse turns
from you, passes through, singing without pause.

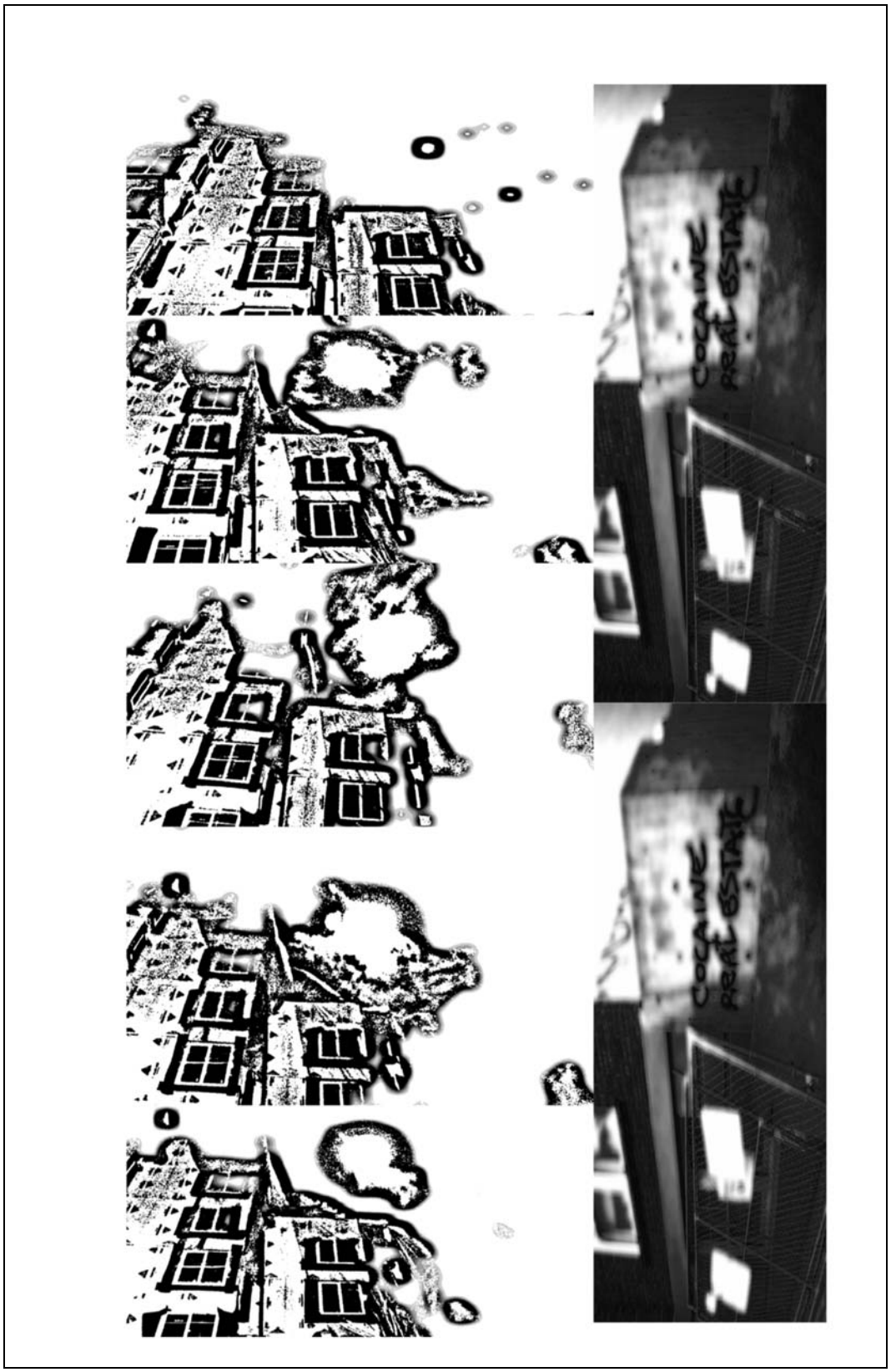
******

Night Flight

Rare hour, what magick blows wide &
subtle here, in the jet's coarse humming,
now, when hardly imagine the world below,
this, the sweet between of mystery's
perpetual flight, you, my glad partner
in scraping the pearls & twigs together,
me, raw singer of pretty tunes & tried ruins,
them, quiet strangers in this winged carriage,
something else, crying to jeweled awareness,
higher now! The earth bears all fine even now.

******

To be continued in Cenacle | *61* | *April 2007*


COCAINE
REAL ESTATE
COCAINE
REAL ESTATE

Ric Amante

Morning Overtures from Maine

A fog-shrouded woman in a pink stocking cap
scuttles along the border of frozen kale
behind the white blocks of the Five O'Clock Hotel.
She works as a spy in the network of light
and interrogates the shoreline nightly,
the red dot of her cigarette burning a hole
through the gauze of starlight.

I step out onto the salt-crusted back porch
to gather my cup of sunrise and wit
and see three black horses rearing up
through spray of surf and dream.

Minus five and sea-smoke flares up
in shifting, haunted tendrils.
Frigid morning glories
climbing rails of Arctic air.

Offshore a trawler drags for quahogs—
large, sinewy clams tagged for bakes and stews.
On his last birthday Jean the Sternman
blew out 33 pink and green candles
from the lap of a stripper then
crawled home drunk and alone—
tough in the winter up here.

Through a block of cold red sky
an old crow with holes in its wings
beats a strong line to the treetops.

Eight At The Bar

We passed this question among us—how old
would we choose to be if we three could be any age.
The spongy, overworked man of 36,
between terse sips of cranberry and vodka,
after a maelstrom of regret and desire,
muttered 25—eyes lingering on the glistening
young midriff behind the bar.

After three marriages, five grandchildren,
and now living in a tiny studio with the company
of spices, books, and photographs—
my friend's eyes shone
fine and radiant with her full 60 years.

And I expected to say, as I always have,
that my fifty plus years were what and why
and where they should be. But no,
startling as a June bug dropped on a collar,
sudden and delicious as the crack of our laughter,
I was 8 again—staring down the kaleidoscopic
funnels of the Merrimack River, surging with the
orange and green dyes from the Essex Mills
as they swirled in tight whirlpools
through my best and freshest mind.

The Comfort of Animals

The after-the-walk comb of choice
is a serrated steel hoop
elegantly bent to a ten-inch teardrop.
I rake it slowly, steadily along
Zoe's lithe spine and winged haunches,
snagging black, white, and gray threads—
airborne helixes
spinning and rolling
like dwarf tumbleweed
across the concrete driveway.
Zoe stands motionless, docile, pleased—
her trust solid and radiant as
the oak grove we reveled in earlier.
I work my fingers beneath her coat
to feel for ticks, bumps, or burs.
Then a stroke under her jaw,
a swirl of both ears,
a light tug on the tail
as she bounds up the back porch steps.
Two biscuits, a slurping of water,
and a return to the corner of the couch.
Or maybe eyes half-open
curled and flat on the carpet
exploring a world
whose ongoing comforts
are sometimes not Zoe's alone.

Still Room for Joy

Three candles burn on the picnic table
salvaged from the curb two houses down.
He wears two wool sweaters and a stocking cap,
sips cold sake from a thrift-store mug.
It helps him think less about
the piece of molar that broke off earlier,
takes him deeper into the Bach
crackling from the pink clock-radio.
He didn't know he'd be living
this way again at sixty-five,
lean and feverish
as a sparrow in a snowstorm.
He rolls a cigarette, strikes a match,
blows a jet of smoke at the ceiling.
As he cracks the window to let out the smoke,
a gust of cold air snuffs the candles—
the room now glowing red and green
from Christmas lights tacked to the walls.

Christmas Rag

Sitting on a pigeon-stained bench
before the plywood and plexiglass creche
on the State House side of the Boston Common,
I splice together the words of strangers
spoken into the small silver shapes
pushed tight to their ears.
"I'm being wrapped for dinner by eight
the new Lynch film the 5:15 train
the money's good I love you . . . "
And a vortex of pigeons has a young
Japanese couple squealing and ducking,
and I've given away three cigarettes,
the last to a kid with a blood-red cobweb
tattooed to the back of his hand.
And in the corner of his half-pint of Jim Beam,
the bright white lights looped over
bare branches of beech and oak
form a thousand-and-one glittering eyes.

COME UNTO ME
I'LL BRATE
THE CHRIST OF
CHRISTMAS
BREAD of LIFE
MISSION

Raymond Soulard, Jr.

Secret Joy Amongst These Times: The History of Scriptor Press, 1995 to the Present

"Think for yourself
& question authority."
—Dr. Timothy Leary

Chapter Twelve
continued from
The Cenacle | 56 | December 2005

It had been four years since I had lived for a full calendar year in the same home, & one of my own choosing. Couches, spare bedrooms, rooming house, generous hosting by friends but none mine own. All transitional while some fucked-up circumstance was playing itself through. Unemployment, heartbreak, defeat high & low, perserverence without guarantee. Through this all I carried my pens & notebooks, filling pages, cracking despair & going further, sometimes handfuls of lingual shimmer, sometimes brooding, shallow, selfish crap, but always another day, another page, a breathless hungry wish.

I lived in 2005 in Seattle with my partner & dearest friend Kassandra Kramer &, on its final day, we wed in her hometown in eastern Colorado. We lived in a studio apartment on Capitol Hill, an artsy, gay area of the city, knew daily its indie coffee houses & murky hills. Its denizens young, friendly as city folk get, which is not saying too much.

The year's challenge, then, where its bruises & woes most collected, was not in my intimate relations or dwelling issues, but in finding decent, ongoing work. Took the whole run of the year, til hardly a week before its end, for me to toss the ball straight & swish through the basket.

Scriptor Press did well in 2005. Completed & disseminated were three issues of *The Cenacle*; six new titles in the Burning Man Books series; 36 online broadcasts of "Within's Within: Scenes from the Psychedelic Revolution"; a developing version of the *ElectroLounge* leaner on dead links & wealthier with online PDF versions of Scriptor Press projects; & an on-time release of *Scriptor Press Sampler*, its first since the inaugural issue in 1999.

Fueled by stability, my writing also prospered. My year-long projects included the *New Songs (for Kassandra)* 180-poem cycle & the 600-page fixtion *Why?* In the first I sought to play short acoustic yet rabidly ambitious songs; in the second, forego easy accessibility for a chance to strike far into something true.

Penury's dread followed along the days, close, closer, close again. One simply has to move as swiftly as the world's resisting forest of bones will let. The bastards never lastly

depart, endless their will to crush & consume. Respond with teeth til become only dust & heart its concluding beat.

Stability means trust in the ground below, & thus a chance to look deeper around at possibilities about. I'd come to Seattle in 2004 because I believed that in the Pacific Northwest both Scriptor Press & my art would bloom new as they both had in mid-1990s during my first years in Boston. Renewal in what I sought—& sought it in two fairly different directions: fleshspace & cyberspace. Both I'd worked in before but a great wish to do more.

Each bears its appeal: fleshspace the timeless one of face-to-face connection, cyberspace the chance to arc too-great physical space to reach souls otherwise unlikely to be ever known otherwise. Thus the year inaugurated with Scriptor Press launching deeper into both these spaces, & the months ensuing these pursuits breached even further.

The ElectroLounge expanded its offerings in January to include PDF files of *Scriptor Press Sampler* | 1 | 1999 & 5 | 2004, completing the collection available there. Also added to the site's "Within's Within" radio show archive were MP3 files for broadcasts from 10/24/04, 11/07/04, 11/14/04, 11/22/04, 12/26/04, & 01/09/05. These six show archives were uploaded &, in October when broadcasts from 1/23/05, 1/30/05, 2/6/05, 2/13/05, 2/20/05 were added, the number raised to eleven. Adding substantial content to Internet sites like *ElectroLounge* is crucial to how we are building legitimate new media in cyberspace. Offering well-made work espousing alternative values & ideas to those spoke by the corporate-owned doglick media. Gift economy, like what exists at Burning Man, goes farther than the idea of "alternative," in attempting to build new human society & relations. Cyberspace transmits many of these idea & espouses them, too. It's work & excitement both to be involved in essentially a global project.

Show Archives:

October 24, 2004 show **features:**
New rock album: **Camper Van Beethoven, *New Roman Times* (2004), return to the world from a long slumber, to present a loosely connected semi-rock opera telling the story of a Texas teenager who joins the military after a 9/11-like event, becomes disillusioned, and joins an anti-government militia...guitar and fiddle freakouts along the way too, of course, heh...**
Classic rock album: **Buffalo Springfield, *Buffalo Springfield* (1966)... his album is one of the key sources of all the high lovely scary dark hippy jamrock that came later...mmm mmm...**
Storybook Time: **Introduction to *The Long Trip: A Prehistory of Psychedelia* Paul Devereux...**
plus tales from the Underground Reader...poem kisses & other sweet noise..it gets better & better....

October 17, 2004 show **features:**
New rock album: **Stereophonics, *You Gotta Go There to Come Back* (2003), rocking hard smarts from yet another welsh band out to keep three chords and the truth alive...hehe...**
Classic rock album: **Jefferson Airplane, *Volunteers* (1969)...San Francisco hippy jammers get hard and loud...lovely noise...**
Storybook Time: **Conclusion of *The Lazy Man's Guide to Enlightenment* Thaddeus Golas...**
plus all manner of word wows and trance strangeness, just loud til soft and then somewhere else indeed...

October 10, 2004 show **features:**
New rock album: **Super Furry Animals, *Phantom Power* (2003), this welsh band rocks high low and sometimes strangely angular, their album a journey into tuneful mazes among artful high noise...**
Classic rock album: **Santana, *Abraxas* (1970)...rock god carlos santana leads his latin-tinged group up and up and then further away...lovely mind melt guitars and organs and so on...**
Storybook Time: **Chapter Nine of *The Lazy Man's Guide to Enlightenment* Thaddeus Golas...**
and wordy music and musical yipes and yawps, rants electronic and acoustic both...hehe...this show delayed by a week by a potent journey cost its bit, and a mix made to respond...called "cry (ayahuasca mix)"...

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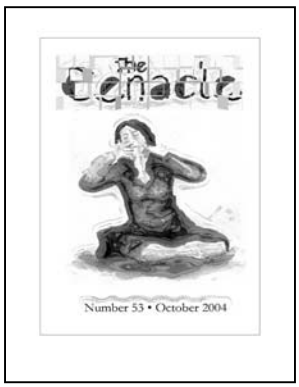
On the first day of 2005 I began a new poem cycle, *New Songs (for Kassandra)*, inaugurating just a few months after I finished the 2000-2004 mammoth work *6 x 36 Nocturnes*. In contrast to the vast songs of that work, some pages long, like epic acid rock guitar solos, *New Songs* is acoustic, most poems under a dozen lines, countless tries at packing the great arching energies of *6 x 36N* into tight, potent bursts. Initially I vowed to write a poem a day for the whole year; after doing this for over a month, I settled on a goal of 180 poems, about one every two days. Half the number of poems of *6 x 36N* but written in a

year instead of four and a half years. I intended the poems to culminate with my marriage to Kassi, to whom they are dedicated. I was also thinking of Pablo Neruda's *100 Love Songs* when I conceived *New Songs*. I wanted not to top *6x36N* in quantity, but to match it in wide, deep, breaching scope.



6 x 36 Nocturnes profoundly changed my ideas about poetry, about the canvas size I could & wished to use. Whatever its worth, I found my voice full, a desire to plumb deep as possible within & without, & return with strange words to describe what found. *New Songs*, a title alluding to Rilke's *New Poems*, continued my pursuits, a wish to raise the intensity of every poem, short & long.

February 2005 saw the late release of *Cenacle* | 53 | October 2004. Despite, maybe because of, its lateness, it's a good issue. In looking it over a couple of years later, I notice especially the visual art it contains. The cover features a rendering of my friend & *Cenacle*-featured poet Judih Haggai, done by her friend Anemone Achtnich & remixed by me. The back cover features a remix of the remix. Also notable are the pictures I took while living in Connecticut, I think a kind of therapy I pursued while living there in 2003-2004. Another graphic image was one Kassi & I made together, a collage of images of Ravenna Park in Seattle. There have been issues of *The Cenacle* where I didn't have much contributor art to go with, so I became more conscious of my (unschooled) skills with photography—& sometimes Photoshop. I believe the new technologies of the past decade or so have made it possible for people without natural genius talent in a given art to breach into valid creation. A good camera combined with Photoshop allows me nearer my old dream of painting beautiful canvases, lets me feel a little bit of that magic in the visual medium I've often known with written language.

The writing in *Cenacle* 53 is good, too. Contributions by Jim Burke III, Judih Haggai, & the continuing serialization reprint (from the *San Francisco Oracle* issue number 7) of "The Houseboat Summit" held in Sausalito, California back in February 1967 by Allen Ginsberg, Timothy Leary, Alan Watts, & Gary Snyder—plus my *6 x 36 Nocturnes*, *New Period*, & the 2001 chapter of this narrative comprise the issue.

In Jim Burke III's *C*53 letter to me, he considers the idea of a "Supreme Being" & argues that no definitive yes or no can truly be defensed. He argues for a "*third alternative*" that would be the "solution to all thought," for possible answers in the "mysteries not bounded by time, space, or yes and no."

I look over Judih Haggai's poems from this issue & no lines leap out at me but instead I marvel at a consistent atmosphere in her poems of parts humor, restlessness, yearning. She sees the world's strangely colliding parts, or parts colliding strangely, & finds her music in these collisions, their sounds of laughter & moan. Her music croons & wishes, moves rhythmically & often without the encumbrance of forethought, or regret.

The next section of my serialized fixtion *New Period* appeared in *Cenacle* 53. Because my fictions are so long, & only so much to an issue, & only so many issues a year, I found myself publishing pages I'd written in early 1999. They bear the sweet of my ongoing truth among the must of old thoughts & passions, fierce hours gone, & gone. A decade of publishing my prose in this singular venue had long revealed these advantages & drawbacks. With the exception of cyberspace, or some unimagined Scriptor Press venture, I can see no better one.

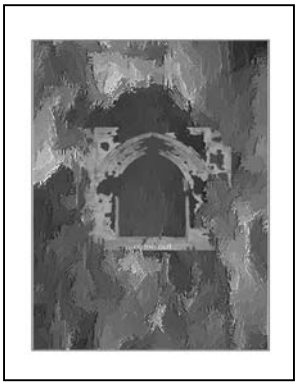
So *New Period* continued to play out its fractured tale of time & space breached between decades & persons, its obsessed rove for clarity's infinite moment, for calm's wantless shore:

> *"There is a secret joy amongst these times, a within's within, a known &speckled spectral thing, an exploding blare & swoop from between our dreams, a series of coded midnight shadows, glyphs taut with our best laughter, all cosmos, we are all cosmos, all cosmos, without & within, we are all, all cosmos, all careening, liquefying, we need to begin now, secret joy, within's within, begin now, trade into ecstasy, begin, trade, each's eyes for every's vision, trade, ears for song, fuck for immolation, Godd for yes, yes for mystery, mystery for silence, silence for delight, delight for evanescence, evanescence for dream, dream for ecstasy, ecstasy, ecstasy, ecstasy, ecstasy for beginning, beginning for continuance, continuance for here, here for now for here for now here now here nowhere now here & now here & now here & now here & now & now & now & now & now & now."*

My *6 x 36 Nocturnes* were nearing their last issue, with five of the final six poems appearing. I was glad for this, too, as these poems had been written a couple of years earlier, & I wanted them given print's debut & let go:

> *Not at peace, dance harder, eat every beat*
> *deeper, feel the world open out in gunfire*
> *& poverty. Feel the war crossing nearby*
> *streets, & peace hustle & snicker right*
> *after, & music lay across every night like a golden bomb.*

In March I began adding *New Songs* to the *ElectroLounge*. The 'net is one swift & successful way to disseminate Art, move writing & images & music swiftly from finished piece to the eyes & ears of countless many. Too, adding these poems continued this site's transformation from links-oriented to content-heavy.



Scriptor Press Sampler | 6 | 2004 *Annual* made its appearance, on time, in April 2005, which also marked Scriptor Press's tenth anniversary. Ten years from a press whose tools consisted of two typewriters & a desktop photocopier, works disseminated by hand to a handful of friends, to a viable presence on the Internet, a press whose works in paper & electronic form can be found scattered round the globe.

What gained, what lost? Always some of each. Gained a wider audience, more forms of works (magazine, chapbooks, website, radio program); lost the intimacy of those gone years, Saturday nights with my Jellicle Guild tribe at Roma Restaurant in New Britain, Connecticut. The nights I was up til dawn readying a *Cenacle* before getting on the Greyhound bus to travel down from Boston. Wishing for wider vistas, for a way to reach the greater world. It came, I tapped it deep, but those Saturday nights haunt me still. Thirteen years of them, many before *The Cenacle* existed, & it mattered, I knew it did then, I still believe this.

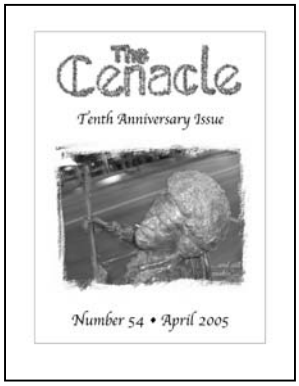
Scriptor Press was my youth's secret project, a dream of pencils & paper. Then it was a shared collaboration during the years when far away was still far away. Now it strives the lands as much as many other indie projects do, takes its small bit of attention, gives all it can. Anyway, sadness, breathe, & back to *Scriptor Press Sampler* 6. In its "Editor's Note" I write, in part, that "[i]ndependent publishing is vitally alive & well in the world, both in print & in cyberspace. The dependence writers & artists once had on central megaliths of power to promote & distribute their ideas & visions is being broken day by day. The freaks are finally finding each other & making new ways. Join us." The issue features G.C. Dillon's "The Cat

and the Moon"; Judih Haggai's poetry; a letter by Jim Burke III; & my *6 x 36 Nocturnes* poem "Terrestrial Music (for Lisa Marie)" & *New Period* fixtion excerpt.

My first challenge with the *SPS* series was to figure out its form & frequency. Once I decided it would be an annual issue in April, I had to figure how to distribute it. For now, it passes round in cyberspace & at events like Burning Man & the Portland Zine Symposium. But this isn't enough. It's intended to scatter round in print form too, in coffeehouses & bookstores & the like. Doing this waits still.

As these projects were happening, Kassi & I were facing more prosaic challenges in Seattle. The Borders Bookstore I'd worked at for nearly a year announced it was closing, & all its employees were suddenly facing layoff in a couple of months. I'd hated the corporate fascist bullshit behind the scenes at the store (employee's bags being searched upon entry & exit; a managerial style designed to enforce constant, sometimes meaningless movement), but the checks cleared & it was steady work.

I'd already been job hunting for better but now I was moving with fierceness. In late April I was lucky enough to contract editing work with a local online travel company. The money was better & I was back to doing professional editorial work. This gig lasted until August; a competent boss having been replaced by a young loon, I was dismissed. Fuck them, I moved along.



Cenacle | 54 | April 2005 made its belated entry into the world in May. Its cover is a chance photo of the Jimi Hendrix statue on Capitol Hill in Seattle. A tiny marijuana roach was placed between his lips by some kind, anonymous person. Kassi & I designed the cover together.

I decided that within *The Cenacle*'s pages I wanted to pursue an ongoing idea of mine. I'd contrived the acronyn PENMAD—Psychedelics, Eros, Nature, Magick, Art, Dreams—to signify my primary pursuits. I thought I'd add to the regular reprint feature of a psychedelics essay a second reprint devoted to one of those other themes every issue.

Toward this end, I found online "Paratheatrical Dreaming" by Antero Alli. In it, Alli writes: "Ancient dream theory tells us we are all dreaming and/or being dreamed..amidst the omnipresent dreamtime . . ." He elaborates a ritual for a kind of waking life engagement with dreamtime.

*C*54 features the 23rd letter published by Jim Burke III, in 42 issues; in this one he writes about Henry David Thoreau as one who deep communed with nature & was a "master of allegory." Burke continues on to consider trees, & warns: "As more trees are taken, more water tables are altered, and more flood plains are lowered, the trees sacrifice themselves as the Cambodian Buddhist monks did to protest the Vietnam War. Self-immolation!! It is more than a coincidence that trees will break before they bend to excess, to bow to the whim of mankind." Burke's prose reaches for hope, reaches past where familiar thoughts lay, reaches for a warmth which encompasses all. Vast thoughts.

Judih Haggai contributes her regular group of rhythmic yearning musics; there is a passage that stands out in "Agree to Disagree":

the spirit of forever
roaring lions through our veins
agree to disagree
agree to carry on
palpitations making noise

we'll pulse together
a new planet on mother earth

There is in these lines a tolerance, there is hope, not for a change in human character to something distinctly new, but a realization of what's there, what good waits within if one, & then another & another, chooses to engage it.

In the third & final part of the February 1967 "Houseboat Summit," Alan Watts, Timothy Leary, Gary Snyder, & Allen Ginsberg discuss technology, civilized society, & the seven-day week which governs modern Western society. Discussing the week's origins in the Old Testament, Snyder says: "it implies that making the world was a job . . . . [a]nd any universe that is worth creating isn't any job to create." Again the word *hope* comes to my mind, like Burke's letter & Judih's poems. A war then, a war now, & astride its horrors, hope.

My writing featured in four pieces in *C*54: a letter comprising "From Soulard's Notebooks"; the last poem of *6 x 36 Nocturnes*; the next section of the fixtion *New Period*; & the chapter of this history covering 2002.

The first of these is a letter to my beloved Kassandra, a lengthy review of Scriptor Press's 10-year history: "I'd like Scriptor Press to matter again as it did once to a few people—matter bigger—from my basement to an obscure restaurant to something more—I pursue this end daily—toward Scriptor Press free & for sale in Seattle, Portland, Vancouver, San Francisco, New York, Chicago, & elsewhere—Paris, London, Tel Aviv—Black Rock City since '99, why not everywhere, urging an indie press to better days, a counterculture to a prouder influence, the re-ascendence of the freaks & their nutty lovely wishes to love the planet, praise the stars, map our dreams, sing a thousand drums strong to those listening in far elsewheres?" Always this pressure to do more, more often, farther, wider . . .

It had taken 4½ years to write *6 x 36 Nocturnes* & it would take this issue and two more to publish its last poem, "Lasting." This poem is the 36th poem of the sixth series of 36 poems, & comprises 36 poems. I'd pushed this series to its aesthetic, emotional, & structural limits. This issue prints 28 of those last 36 poems. I wrote them while living in Portland, Oregon, as my dream arced through Western skies, & slowly faded, & yet I lived on. Impossibly, I lived on, I believe literally my *Nocturnes* were greatly responsible. When love was gone, Art remained. Art insisted. Art held me up when nothing else did, & when I refused all else too.

As I read these poems now, winter 2006-2007, them several years old, I see how deeply I embedded in them. Nobody could read them them & know them as I do. I see their bloodstains, I see their furious wordless undersurface. I remember their aching nights, years of aching nights. They comprised my faith, spoke my magick, dreamed my hopeless hope.

There is one poem, "[untitled]," that was unlike any I'd ever written. I was back in Connecticut, where some of the late *Nocturnes* were written, & one night was sick in my friend's bathroom, tripping very high & squat over the throne. I stood up, looked down at the least of myself afloat in water, & later wrote to it:

The residual is comfort. A free sigh among
the monuments, heat now sated. Breathe.
Relax. I look down at it. Shit is beautiful.

An elaborate 36-line joke. The *Nocturnes* now had everything I could offer. What left but to finish them?

New Period [a new fixtion] continued in *Cenacle* 54. It is drenched in the lysergic novelty that was my life at the end of the 1990s. Graduate school in Boston & LSD. I truly believed in Art & nothing else comforted me, & Art did not comfort me enough, conundrum. I was

so deep in my words & the world's Art they embedded within, that perhaps there was no room for anyone else that deep. Has anything changed, near a decade later?

I don't know if people change so much as evolve, & some even cease doing this after a time. What my years living alone, most of my free hours alone have brought to me now, married, is a sense of the value & pain of solitude. How it teaches until it corrodes with overdose. How the mind adjusts to its own company, & re-adjusts to intimates. How humans, in short, are every one neither quite solitary nor gregarious. Choices involved, & made, as countless other things.

Still, *New Period* sticks to me freshly at moments:

> *Begin, raw, incandescence. Raw, full moon, broad tree in sleepless field of dancers & doors. Full moon, raw, strips of woe. Raw. Incandescence. Begin.*
>
> *Continue, mature, dreams til daylight . . . then blankness . . . hookah explanations . . . theories, purgations, crescendos. Blood & thunder. Continue, dreamless daylight. Beards & woolen caps 'gainst the frost of doubt. Cold. Colder. Burn. Burning.*
>
> *Burn. Burning. Most hopeful that we all burn together. Most fearful that we are all candles, flickering on, flicking off.*
>
> *But burning. Burning, no matter the. Burning, beginning, still raw, words & skin, music & colors, laughter & fire. Laughter.*

*C*54's back cover was by an online friend, Fuzz, of a favorite stretch of road in Denmark, & captioned multiply: "wither next?" So I was asking every day & keep asking, & keep asking.

In June I worked at the *ElectroLounge*'s radio page, concerned with both adding to its archives, & posting descriptions of new broadcasts. The summer proved an especially busy one for publishing-related events. We attended an event called *Stetset*, a gathering of local indie & zine publishers, at a downtown Seattle bar & Cafe. It was fun for Kassi & I to see our local peers. We also attended the Portland Zine Symposium, a larger event in downtown Portland. To the first event we stayed up all night readying copies of *Cenacle* 54 to bring. To the latter we brought *Cenacle*s, *Scriptor Press Sampler*s, RaiBooks, & Burning Man Books, a whole array of projects to gift away.

These events were new to us, a way to expand where our work touched & who we met. Our trip in August to Burning Man 2005 was, of course, the summer's highlight & what our work finally pointed toward. We drove this year, our car Syd, our bikes hanging from her trunk, our week's worth of water, supplies, tents, packed with. No Borders Free Bookstore open for business at Black Rock City for a seventh year.

What made the trip more poignant & precious was the money difficulties we faced that August. My job at the online travel agency ended suddenly. Panic at the time; looking back, good riddance. Scrambling for new work while readying hundreds of chapbooks made tense days. It worked out, even to being able to have time off from a new job to travel to Burning Man. I was happy it played out as it did. The new job was editorial work for a phone company. What mattered, bluntly, was the paychecks clearing, & our freedom to leave Seattle for a week for our other home.

The volumes in Burning Man Books 2005 are heavy on modern short fiction: Herman Hesse's lyrical "Strange News from Another Planet": William Faulkner's horrific "Dry September"; Jorge Luis Borges' cryptic "Circular Ruins"; & Philip K. Dick's sweet "The King of the Elves." Also a seventh volume of writings on psychedelics titled *All is Dream*. And, dear to me especially for the work Kassi & I did on it together, *Many Blooms: An Anthology of Modern Women Poets*.

The selection process for Burning Man Books has become more complex as the library of titles has grown. For the first several years, I simply selected my favorite writers;

more recently I began to seek a balance, a range. More female writers, more non-Western writers, more pre-modern writers. Slowly, this plan has been working, while the literary quality of the library has grown from its variety. The short fictions this year brought several major voices into the collection (Faulkner, Hesse, Borges) &, unhooked from his genre grotto, the great Philip K. Dick. *All is Dream*, the newest psychedelics anthology, continued Scriptor Press's open mission to educate the counterculture old & young (& anyone else willing to read) about the profound & continuing effects of psychedelics on human development.

Many Blooms was conceived by Kassi who wanted a volume devoted to women poets. We tried out various ideas, asking ourselves what range of times & places could we fit into a 40-60 page chapbook. After reading widely & thinking out loud to each other many times, we chose six American & European poets: Wislawa Szymborska, Elizabeth Bishop, Jorie Graham, Adrienne Rich, Marianne Moore, & Margaret Atwood. This book works because its focus is whittled sharply enough & its contents are chosen carefully enough to create a coherent whole, a sense in most readers that here is a book with rewards within, spruced up, nicely presented, its pleasures awaiting.

The trip to Black Rock City was a tiring one, several days' drive, & the Black Rock Desert in high summer its withering self. Burning Man is sometimes depicted in the mass media as a week-long party but in truth it is a pilgrimage with many facets. It's not easy—souls strain at times, bodies deplete, minds diminish. No Borders Free Bookstore is a success because it engages people as thinking, feeling individuals, & gifts them for being so. Hard, beautiful event.

News of the Hurricane Katrina disaster in the American Gulf Coast was hitting the airwaves as people were departing the event. Collections were taken up at the exit gate. Katrina has become a symbol of government indifference & incompetence. Many died

needlessly, a city was destroyed needlessly, where once government help for the victims of a disaster would have been immediately assured, this time there was finger-pointing, blame-shirking, tries at deluding the country & world about how bad things really were down in Louisiana and Mississippi.

Governments are more than controlling instruments of power, & people are more than tax-paying entities. We live, along with every creature & object, on one planet, subject as much to its fundamental aspects as it is to our behavior. When we, every one of us of every kind, become *you* & *they* & *else*, little good will come of it. Once I more admired the ideas of tribalism as superior to nation-states. Now I see any exclusion of anything for any reason as death gesture. We are one manifest as many. There is our challenge, especially humans who fancy themselves "stewards of the planet," even believe in their superiority. Look around where you stand or sit. See a muddled picture at best of how well our stewardship is going.

News of Katrina's destructions & the iniquitous war in Iraq filled headlines & TV news shows as the year wore down. I've aimed Scriptor Press to advocate against Bush's American Empire aspirations, adding to the voices of dissent. Much of this high-minded intent manifests in small ways: working steady at my new job to pay for desktop publishing & dissemination costs; pruning & updating *The ElectroLounge*'s links pages; adding more radio archives to *The ElectroLounge*, & a radio show Podcast link. I did my radio show at least three times a month & began work toward *Cenacle* | 55 | October 2005.

Kassi & I had our own hours too, especially weekends wherein we went to movies, journeyed through the city, & stayed up all hours on Saturday nights watching old & new TV shows like *Twin Peaks*, *Bones*, *Threshold*, *Invasion*, & *Surface*. Happy, private hours, time for me away from pen & press.

In November, our wedding date nearing, we flew to Connecticut for Kassi to meet my kin & friends, & see my origins, those existing & those ghosts live yet in my memory. It was a strange confluence to be sitting in my family's home in Connecticut with my wife-to-be. The years collapsed into an afternoon. The first woman I'd ever introduced to my parents and siblings. Their gifts & well wishes. Blood bond's multiple insistences.

I showed KD many places where I used to write; we traveled by public bus all over as I had done back to my teenage years. It was fun, maybe the kind embedded in sadness & sentiment. Cement Park, Peoples Donutshop. I let the old places have their honored due, & then we flew back to our shared life in Seattle.

Arrived back with yet another of my contract jobs over, this one by project's completion, what to do next. Health issues made the situation all the more tense. I jobhunted like an obsessed soul, no choice, none other priority. Jobhunting is an indecent activity when one's survival is at stake, whatever peace & stability one has achieved. I'd been through my share of suffering & empty wallet, sleepless nights, learned to walk a humbler path by circumstance, not choice, & walked it I did. Others had helped, but it was my will being tested. Had I come back from the worst of my days intact enough to take care of myself & another?

One morning in early December I walked into a downtown Seattle office & submitted myself to several hours of interviews for a job I thought had already been taken—but a chance call to check had discovered to me that it had not.

That morning I was in a kind of psychic sirocco, I had to win this job, there was neither time nor options left, I was out of my mind that morning, I spoke with a confidence & certainty only adrenaline & desperation could have raised in me. Whenever I think about the mysteries of the world, strange things which cannot be singularly accounted for, I think

of that morning, how I had to will into being an uncreated circumstance, & I did. I admit I don't understand my self muchless anything else. Life befuddles all.

Employed, finally, so long searching for stability, for more than retail work, more than contract work, for something with good pay & benefits, & respect for the years I've spent building up my skills as an editor, & having scored work as a database administrator & editor, relieved as fuck, I turned to getting *Cenacle* | 55 | October 2005 completed. It was late but it got made.

*C*55 is a fairly simple issue with only a few contributors. The cover, a complex psychedelic depiction of the "Green Man," is by recent contributor Fuzz, a woman who I'd also worked with on SpiritPlants Radio. The rest of the issues art collects nigh a dozen photographs Kassi & I'd taken in Seattle & while on our Burning Man travels, which I then shot through Photoshop with what layperson's graphic skills I've developed.

Each issue of *The Cenacle* I describe in this history includes a mention of Judih Haggai's poems. One of her poems in *C*55 is called "cadmium blue" & ends thus:

is this the color
of my love
an oozing tube modestly spent
to paint you
in print and folly
& to sign in pre-dawn whisper

I think sometimes, when lucky, we get an artist stuck in our heads, could be words, images, sounds, etc. We conjure within this person, a personal version, real but within. I read those words above & hear my inly Judih, add these words, their music, to my stores of her words & music.

Wanting to cross Scriptor Press projects more often & deeply, *C*55 featured Carl Gustav Jung's essay, "On the Nature of Dreams," previously re-printed as a volume of Burning Man Books 2004. Jung ranges about his mind for an understanding of the dream function & concludes in part that dreams "compensate" for an individual's waking life while remaining otherwise subordinate to it. He writes of personal dreams & those that derive from racial collective unconscious & yet concedes, for all his pages of theory, that no final answer may be offered on the topic.

The issue's other reprint is "The Psychedelic [in] Society: A Brief Cultural History of Tripping" by Charles Hayes, which also appeared in the Burning Man 2005 chapbook *All is Dream*. Hayes gives a pretty extensive accounting of psychedelia in both modern & ancient times, accounting for such matters as the Eleusinian Mysteries & the psychotropic origins of the Disney film *Fantasia*. He concludes: "There is no doubt that with the advent of the new millennium, the use of psychedelics will continue to rise, both responsibly and otherwise, as they are increasingly seen as tools for penetrating the veils of quotidian *maya* and mass-media illusion spun by corporate greed." Veritas.

My contributions were of the same kind as the previous issue. "From Soulard's Notebooks" was a patchwork covering job woes, poetry, Burning Man, & my return in August '05 to Portland, Oregon for the first time since I'd moved away in February 2002. The issue's chapter of this history covered 2003, a year I began in careening despair & concluded in wispy new hopes.

6x36 Nocturnes features the last six but one poems in the series. I look at these poems with a loving sentimental hunger, to be so close to concluding a 4½ year work, all the blotches & the blood of it:

"Open again tonight, sing like thighs
new & ready for the first hard take,
something matters, everything matters,
every passing moment implode &
then gone, new greening, ever first
alike, universe perpetual moan & make."

So hungrily close.

Finally, to tell of *New Period,* its intense halo of loneliness, its bejoyed acid many marriages. Or tell of it thus:

> *"I watch a shiny-cheeked smiling lass near me an energy of youth excitement vitality fecundity roars aura round her yet there she sits five feet lone million estrangements from me I love you all out there tonight love you all the ones I know knew will know won't know the magic is alight tonight between my heart mind eye pen paper & I can only say: grateful. Because one hurt me. Because another smiled. Because this one sprayed perfume on me. Because that one sold me LSD very cheaply. All the money spent years & years beers & kisses & full moons & a continuous laughter always & everywhere I love you all because tonight I hurt so badly because tonight I am afloat with ecstasy because I have a good battered bed to go home to, because no warm arms await me, because this one thinks me a hero & that one knows I'm a goat because I'm in someone's dreams & someone else is in mine because I've learned to write in some queer secret way more kin to the classics of another era than the buzzcut neon landscapes of today"*

The work for *C*55 & its distribution finished in mid-December & though I started work on the next issue, my focus for the last couple of weeks of the year was starting my new job, & getting married. The former proceeded only a bit; the latter was winding up months of preparation.

I'd always expected to get married at some point in my life. Most of us do, some of us more than once. I'd come close a couple of times before, but I suppose others do that too.

When it was finally happening, with Kassi, it seemed in a way more a progression than the "great leap" some call it. Kassi was a marrying kind too, & she was quite wanting to with me.

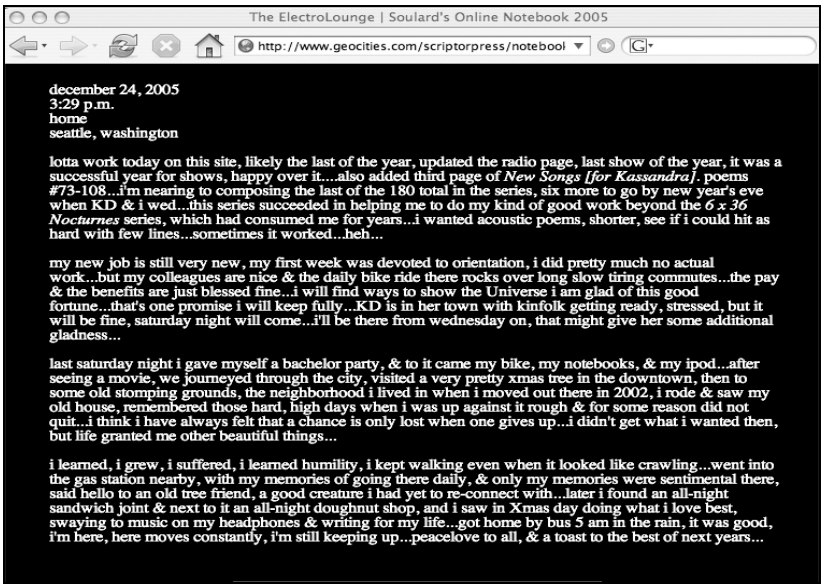
Kassi was raised in the Roman Catholic Church, & it remains important in her life. Her beliefs are shaded, not controlled, by her religion. She has her own mind & heart about things. I was not raised in either of my parents' religions, & believe my greatest youthful influences that stay are the many books I read, & the poverty my family experienced.

What mattered between us was how we knit together our shared days. Maybe that's all that matters. I've loved so many people over the years, most of whom are likely still alive, most of whom I've not seen in years. People come & go, especially if one moves from place to place, geographically & psychically. So much of what people share is stuff of an hour, a passing year. Traces remain, deep graffiti on the soul.

Kassi is true, she & I share a love deep with empathy, she has stayed, stayed in times when I had little to offer, when I offered little. My life has twisted & shined me to a bright, moving half-wreck. My inner city burns & sings. To share any kind of love with me is intense, & changing. I've made & lost many friends, many loves. I bear a slime trail of regret & ecstasy behind me. I don't know if I'd be someone else if I could or if I'd change my past life. Shit happens. Flowers grow.

With Kassi already in Colorado readying for our New Year's Eve day wedding at her little hometown church, I gave myself a bachelor party. My "Online Journal" at *The ElectroLounge* describes best:

> *Last Saturday night i gave myself a bachelor party, & to it came my bike, my notebooks, & my ipod… after seeing a movie, we journeyed through the city, visited a very pretty xmas tree in the downtown, then to some old stomping grounds, the neighborhood i lived in when i moved out there in 2002, i rode & saw my old house, remembered those hard, high days when i was up against it rough & for some reason did not quit… i think i have always felt that a chance is only lost when one gives up… i didn't get what i wanted then, but life granted me other beautiful things…*
>
> *i learned, i grew, i suffered, i learned humility, i kept walking even when it looked like crawling… went into the gas station nearby, with my memories of going there daily, & only my memories were sentimental there, said hello to an old tree friend, a good creature i had yet to re-connect with… later i found an all-night sandwich joint & next to it an all-night doughnut shop, and I saw in Xmas day doing what i love best, swaying to music on my headphones & writing for my life… got home by 5 am in the rain, i'm here, here moves constantly, i'm still keeping up…*



Earlier that year, on Burn Night at Burning Man 2005, with sparks flying over our heads, Kassi & I vowed fidelity to each other in a high, happy moment. Earlier than that, when we first met in person in December 2003, we'd kissed love in the rain of an Omaha hotel parking lot. There are the many mundane moments between two beloved, they pass on way to those which float, tap the heart's undersurface, stay, comprise the private myth two share, sometimes more than two, sometimes five companions, brothers at war, maybe two bartenders sweeping up at 3 a.m., maybe a cluster of exotic dancers, gulls, oaks, the shifting tectonic plates of the earth, tell me any these untrue, prove it so. Our vow in the little town's church witnessed by kinfolk I don't near to understand or know well, yet by their presence they stood up for me, sanctioned my alliance with their tribe, & we all saw the new year in together, I learn again & again how each of us is & isn't alone, both, perpetually, one as many, many the gift, one after the yearn, the difference little, & less.

Judih Haggai

Field Emerges

Birds fly low
mechanical scarecrow
grinds metallic blues

A field emerges
in gold-streaked wind
rising towards the sun

Windshield Whipped

whipped by torrents of ignorance
i continue to motorize intention

pedal to the floor
safely earthbound tires

my road undefined
my head ten miles behind

radio blasting silence
windshield whipped
dominatrix belted in

billboards heave their last sighs
no rest for the weary

vanilla pi

the chance of vanilla exponentially repeating itself
in my head
equals the sum of pi and unlimited fantasy
divided by hours in a morning
while the sun sleeps late
nowhere to go
time on sabbatical

the scent of possibility
my mind sees upholstered comfort
oh linger in computation
may calculation never end

wind swept insights

i've caught a glimpse of wind swept insights
rolling tumbleweed wisdom
momentary in its nearness
racing along its invisible track

these sudden syncs of crow, hawk and human choral songs
we breathe in incredible magic
then we break apart like clouds in a hurry

what hurry? this speed, on speed,
lost speed in a tumult of week month
i mourn then i gulp a throatful of courage
as new tumbleweed somersaults with its ancient debris
a sandy riff of now and tomorrow

my pulse is my music
i sing only this
my voice clamours skywards
alight the wings of an encouraging beat

twisting the roll

dust fed shoes roll the twisted sapphire path
it's not or is it
is it my time, this time, this day?
if you hear my heartbeat, show me a sign.

is that cloudbreak a message from you
how long have you been speaking?
i sing along with lou-reeds and palm treed cries
if you hear my song, sing me a sign

sing me a sign, my ancestral consciousness
belt it out, before this lifetime's through
i can hear ya, yeah, i'm listening now
if you feel my pulse, pass me a sign

Solstice oh-six

a small light kindles at the thought of new found sun
light beckons light
hope grows in excited heartbeats
slowly the djembe resonates
anticipating hums
a faint hint of spark
a distant meteor flies

if all this is true, then maybe i'll survive
my being warmed by inner fire
my arms linked to spinning chakra kindred

solstice smiles ahead

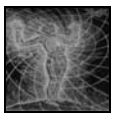
2.

winter mid-time
six days on
one week less
to halfway dark

a joyous apprehension
links arms with depressing contention
what sad poems will i write
as i rock my mind near a dying fire

what fast rock will i dance to
as i blow my soul near a raucous pyre

ancient rituals shimmy with modern delusions
solstice sympathy for the wild tympani

Raymond Soulard, Jr. 

Things Change (Six Thresholds)

[a new fixtion]

Part Three.

"Because the world is round
it turns me on . . ."

"One-thing-I-can-tell-you-is-
you-got-to-be-free . . ."

—The Beatles, *Abbey Road*, 1969.

My words become stained with your love, I moan nightly, you occupy everything, you occupy everything, I moan month after month, knowing no other way anymore—help me—a word—help me—a word—

A word arrives from you—several—love—happiness—suffering—longing—desire—& tonight I sleep & wake both alone tonight tomorrow—hands touch only pillow—face kisses but only dream-wives

page 201—lookee lookee—September 22, 2002—hey this story is two years old in about 19 hours—long ago I gave up its public possibilities—I'm 17 again & the audience wields the pen—I have 9 dollars to my name, live in another's home—3000 miles & 21 years variously intervene—but here I am—

Part three as though it matters—yes—it matters—the future laughs quietly at me—yes all of this matters—someone reads or hears these pages in a later hour I cannot know—
who are you who listens or reads? do you love me truly or vulnerably? where were you tonight as I sat alone on a green bed listening best I could to Police's "Roxanne" on Seattle radio?

who are you & how did you come to read or hear these words? Are you protecting the man I have become? Do you believe that I am strong enough to dance alone? I can't imagine you'd ever be shown these words if you did.

I don't want to dance alone anymore.

Tonight hurts me, hurts me down good. I sat at a computer reading how Artists always writhe & rarely reap & go on making because they have no other defense against their hearts much less the world—

moan. cry. love hurts. I make pretty words out of it all I make pretty words someone told me that long ago, someone else told me that recently—

Part 3. 2 years. 203 pages now. Growl. Yip.

I love you, Lisa in Portland, I'll marry you before this story finishes—I'll try—

I beg ye, Universe, grant me my true love, bring her to me, I accept what good & pain to come from this. Bring her to me. This prayer of mine persists.

I sit in a room not my own. You sleep in a bed without me.

Who are you who reads or hears this?

Look at me. Where were you tonight?

Kindness seems important as ever, the free, intended gestures, eye needfully aware & seeking,

"Yes," says Rebecca, pulling at my hand—"Come into the story again—come on—you don't have to be alone—"

I come because she takes me—into Luna T's Cafe—there are my friends—kindness waits everywhere—one offers, one receives—yes, tis true—

More colors, wilder music, the beginning of a new freedom—the drinkers at the bar laugh & roar—some nod toward me where I sit by Rebecca—I'm strange but familiar—a want to tell of this place anew—"yes" says Rebecca—confident, surging—"yes" says I reply softly—"maybe yes"—maybe really—

the days crackle open to mystery more & more—help me—I say this to anyone—help me as I try days gallop around me with least sense of order—

I look at Rebecca hard: "Is she gone?" "No, Raymond" "What do I do?" "Plan & prepare" "I'm scared" "Of course that's why you turn to this page" "Help me" "I am" "Help me!" "I will" "Please" "Yes"

Days waning, others accelerating
I can do this—I can—I will—
yes—I will—

"Yes, you will"

"What does any of it mean?"

"Not yet—keep trudging—no way out but through"

A gleam. A way. Nothing explained, nothing fruited with obvious meaning. I resume writing in a different city, one returned to after months, one I am alone in. Rented room. Black & white TV. Mickey Mouse comforter. Telemarketing job, no, no.

"She's thinking of you, Raymond." "No, she's not." "She is. More & more. She tries to ignore the wrong she lets go on. She can't" "No." "Yes." "Why should I believe anymore? It does me no good." "Just allow for what you don't know."

I don't know what to believe, why, or to what end, if any. This is just a pen moving because it does not know quit. I open the notebook containing these pages wishing some other work revealed itself. None does, ever. I'm bonded to myself, here I am. No answers, just quitless.

"She feels you, wishes about you." "Does it matter? Tonight again I sleep alone, writhing, wracked." "She is unhappy with her choices. She remembers everything too well." "What do I do but stumble fucking on?" "Allow for what you don't know."

I was supposed to write "All that is, is kin" but tonight I feel nothing or little like that.

Wanting to feel again without cringing, without avoiding this shadow or that one—

I look at Rebecca. "Things aren't what they seem" "Are they ever?"
This story can become a story again,
can try, not easy, no way out but
through, no way out but thro o o o o o

A new dream. A bigger dream. No longer a dream at all. Breathe it, believe it, lose it, & again, & again.

How the world builds & rebuilds & burns & explains nothing & offers everything
& what choice but to make?
& what choice but to seek
the most dangerous dance?
& where is anything to begin but here, from here, dubious, but a song can be found in any air, any soil so yes begin here & thrust out anywhere
til something somewhere catches, that's how someone said is the way things work—
Did I forget how to write fiction or did it cease to matter? I did it because I had to, but now what? Is it optional?
Is there a crisis? I don't know.

No. I suppose not. Unless crisis was a substantially inspiring plotline—
"ha."
"another"
"ha"
"another"
"ha"
"another?"
"ha"
"OK no more"

"ha"

the jukebox would be gone, or perhaps a jungle-born beast, something like that—the bar wouldn't serve alcohol anymore—no—it's gone by that—the music would tend both toward the electronic & the tribal—with rock still at its heart—would Luna T's still be in Hartford? Well, as much as it ever was—a Hartford I was born in, briefly dwelled as a child, found refuge in as a young pilgrim or whatever I was then—

Or maybe it would be what it always was—a rough cut bar from some other time, or several—

I don't know.

Beauty is summoned, crowds, & chants deeper within. Beauty is guerilla, power swung about with music's flow & dangering

no better answers than these, & walking the streets undenounced

"allow for what you don't know"

& to keep pushing, yes, by savage & twist, by fool & whatever falls inkly 'pon the page, push it on, out, in, further, one day I et some mushrooms & fell slowly dark, the next I raised up & said liberation & danger, creatures of the mind too tall to be tamed & surrounded for long, creatures of flame & wave, creatures that roar & revel best by night, yes, to keep pushing, a hoary bitch sheet at a time, a word, a line, help me, I'm drowning & swimming better than ever, to push on with fewer reasons than ever, til none, but not quite, always the shiny one among the shades, fast as a blink, a pretty bastard, knows better than I do what I want & what I must, knows there is no choice but to 'keep swingin' & immolatin'—

"Rebecca, do something"

lights, darks, I've several clues but to different mysteries—

"Rebecca!"

Gimmee another, one more, an extra pretty one, can she please stay this time?

"OK, but he won't really listen"

She grabs my pen but for a word or two I keep writing—oh yes fuck pens I'll write with my fingers & dirty city air if that's what's left—

"Raymond"
"No"
"Raymond"
"They always fucking leave!"
"Raymond"

"Why? Tell me—it's not my fists—it's not my shouts—it's not my fucking lack of laughs—& what do they leave for? Someone simpler, saner, something?"

She says nothing. I stop. Silence does what words cannot do—leash & subdue me—

"Rebecca, just tell me why—that's all—"

She says nothing I lean into her why will the next one leave too? No matter what I'll do she'll leave

Beauty is guerilla I keep thinking this—three words what comfort I possess—

Dr. Arnold T. Knickerbocker looks at me, near & nearer. **"We contrive neither our making nor our demise. Our wills unleash haphazardly with results neither more likely happy than not. At best we flutter briefly in discontinuous outbursts of ecstasy.**

"Gather not disparate bright signs & call them a township of joy's founding! Call not this day's yawp of visceral immolation meaningful kindred to that day's exceeding tide of dancing possibilities!"

"Rebecca! Now it's the old man!"
"How can we do any peaceable imbibing here with all this yelling!"

She shrugs. "They won't stop. It's what they like to do best."

Butterflies from fire, I made many of them; poems, kisses, they resembled one thing or another—songs in the forest's native alphabet, thumping & creaking, words wrought from chips of bark, slivers of moonlight

"Raymond"
"This is what I do best, Rebby, how I praise & mourn, how I find what matters & cradle it."

Butterflies from fire, kisses familiar from within, I don't remember who you are at the moment, muse disguised as girl, freaks, blinks, bombs of pain land lightly, boom when the soul is hushed, wishfully smiling—

I suppose this story could care on some other way or cease now, it wouldn't matter—yet see it shamble on, remembrance, hope—

Strange how loneliness & hunger return together—that's how it's happened, & again—the feeling of wanting fixtion again—a little, then a little more

all the muse within wishes is for pen blazing alone—

The muse never leaves & perpetually changes & moments clung together when her image hovers samely are trickery—

& either learn this or not—

I think: for this story to matter again I have to write it like now & to even learn that much is big how to write it like now—another beginning's beginning—

"Rebecca"
"Raymond"
"Why does she linger?"
"She does"
"Does it matter?"
"You're asking?"

I don't know it seems foolish—
yet something—something—

"Raymond"
"Rebecca"
"No. It's Lisa."
"No."
"Yes."
"No."
"Yes. Keep writing."
"I can't do it like this. It's hard enough being in your city."
"I'm with you. I dream you."
"Stop. No. Too many weeks. Weeks becoming months."
"Allow for what you don't know."

I—WANT—MY—FUCKING—LIFE—BACK
IF—YOU—DON'T—WANT—ME—GET
OUT—OF—MY—FUCKING—HEAD

"Things are not simple. They never were."
"Lisa, if you want me to keep you in mind something needs to pass from you to me. You've been silent for nearly two months."
"You've felt me. You feel me now."
"I wanted you for my wife. All of you. I was ready. But not for perpetual silence. No."
"Just wait."

I wouldn't save without choice.

All is maya. Dream. Art. Play. Illusion.
Ice cream. Flavored smoke. Pathways
of Love filled with strangeness. Acceleration,
diminishment, writhing.

Few words of men impress me anymore.

I listen little, then less if possible.
Revelations trail emptily down
streets not worth walking.

For this story to matter its doors must need fall open, its doors must need disintegrate—

The back of Luna T's doesn't end, there is no back wall, woods, jungle, fields, on & on, it trails in & through dreamland, Dreamland, & beyond, to places neither waking nor dream, spaces that cluster into being & then drift apart as clouds do

I am in Portland, Oregon but there is no real distance between me & Luna T's all space is one place all time is now

Cement Park 1981 Hartford, Connecticut
Coffee Time Coffeehouse 2002 Portland, Oregon

the lesson is how nothing comes or goes but changes. Things change. If even that.

The drinkers at the bar rage on merrily, always will. Mr. Bob the barman knows what has opened up, out, & can go there whenever he would—when & where the toy ideas of doll minds—but still he chooses to pour the drinks, play the radio, follow baseball or whatever happens to be going—

"Why?"
"I'm a comfort to you"
"Pain"
"I know, son."
"Pain"
"I know. But you elect to eschew the bottle. That's hope any thinking mind can see"

Sometimes I'm sitting with him long imaginary afternoons & then some rhythm lingers about me with a tap, a thrum, & I turn away to listen, turn again & again, yes & then I'm somewhere else, & I play my body's dancing delights through & beyond, the drums roar choicelessly, the fire fills the sky

Rebecca is with me my truest muse I suppose shining I cannot know her save as one knows a window's view of a flying cosmos

Merry Muse drawls along my wiggling torso my truest muse I suppose sometimes a red haired woman sometimes the full moon I cannot know her save as one knows the sliding within of one's desires

Others & their names accumulate my truest muse I suppose vibrating near far & I cannot know them by taste nor touch love is filled with strangeness

"Pain"
"Dance, son, & harder"

Dr. Arnold T. Knickerbocker in war pain & skins raises a flaming spear high & cries
"Nothing less than everything to come beckons! Annihilation is a beggar's cup in a cosmic library of ideas walled by stars! Give over & up & out! Relinquish thine life's overflowing bounty! Call faith a damaged cup along an empty street!"

The hunger does not diminish, no matter, I sit empty alone maps too crumbled to advise

Americus looks to Grey. Nearly a nod between them not quite—nearly—

"It almost feels real again. I keep pushing at it. Something to light up this scattering living ragged, but moments—"

Faith the hard motherfucker's refuge, his hidden bauble, his something put away safely in whatever bed chamber, whatever shit job, whatever fuckedup romance

Grey laughs. "The boy has a little something still!"

I'm in another city of strangers, wiggling, sidewalks & streetlights a city's alphabets, money its blood, desire its breath

to walk a thin pathway between the Atlantic & Pacific Oceans & call this time both forgotten & pending—

All is maya. Eat some acid & find out. There are no spaces between. There is no between at all—

Rebecca smiles over at me & sketches more rapidly—

What could this story possibly fucking mean anymore? So much come & gone while it's been leafing out—what's left? What isn't?

Someone asked me for a word to sum it all up & I knew the word, my question:

Why?

And:
"So you write to me offering half friendship"
"It's what I have to give to you"
"It's what you want?"
"No"
"What do you want, Lisa?"
"I WANT YOU"
"But?"
"I don't know anymore. I feel you all the time. I want you so badly it makes me cry & I cry so hard it hurts"
"But you offer half friendship?"

"I couldn't say more"
"Why?"
"What if you said no? What if you hate me?"
"I won't reply to your note. You'll have to do better"
"Do you love me?"
"You seem to think so"
"Do you?"
"I don't know, Lisa. It doesn't matter"
"IT DOES! I NEED TO KNOW"
"NO"
"TELL ME"
"When you offer half friendship, I don't give you back much"
"Please, Raymond ☹"
"If this matters you'll do better."
"It does. It's my whole world like it always was."
"Then do better. Don't reply now. Just do better."

I look at Rebecca. She nods.
"What now?"
"Wait"
"Still"
"Yes"
"And? Then? What?"
"Wait. She'll say more."
"Raymond, it's Lisa, talk to me."
"I don't know what to say"
"Be honest with me like always"
"I don't know what to say."
"Do you love me?"
"Do you?"
"Yes."
"I won't let you hurt me again, Lisa."
"I know."
"But I won't lie or be cruel"
"I know"

I look at Rebecca. She says nothing.
"What do I do?"
"Wait."
"For what?"
"She dreams you, Raymond. It's not going away. She belongs to you but you can't claim her yet."
"I've been waiting a long time"
"She knows. She has too."
"True love waits"
"Yes. It's not been for nothing."

"Raymond"
"I love you"
"I love you too"
"We have to stop hurting each other"
"I know"
"Is it possible?"
"I think so"
"Do you want to be with me?"
"Always"
"You're dreaming me?"
"I always do. There isn't anything else."
"This is still the path from the Underworld?"
"Yes"

I look at Rebecca.
"She needs me still"
"Yes."
"She tried not to"
"Yes"
"But the dreams came harder"
"Yes"
"So now she's allowing them a little"
"Yes"
"Scared as fuck about what will happen"
"Yes."
"And so I wait"
"A little longer."
"Does it stay this hard perpetually?"
"No. You'll be surprised"

This universe a mist, a light, a shimmer. Evocation, sometimes blind. She sways & eludes, dreams harder in the nights fiercer, til need to move again overwhelms fear. Music's dream of manifestation, sometimes harder than dancing's best, sometimes perfect.

Fingers of fire, thighs wet for brighter kinds of knowing yet her true lover slows & slows

Love a mist, a light, a shimmer, swings near & away & a heart must keep beating despite, must wait for return, dodge the million ways of doubt,

"Yes, Raymond."
"I'm waiting"
"Wait"
"I've never been this deep in before"
"Me neither. Don't worry. I'll protect you now"

I look at Rebecca. "Yes" she says. Yes.

I know nothing but love anymore, the rest is cracks & noise—I wait for you to arrive where I am, where you are bound—all that matters—all that ever is—you'll get here soon—nothing else ever really mattered—just love—how it shakes wildly, grieves, persists—how its bastards within know no scripture but yes & more—

I want more. A light, a shimmer. Danger, delight. No plan, no alphabet. I watch your cheeks trance into shadows & know nothing but love. But love. Nothing but love. Love. Tonight love of you is home, want of you is cage. Other nights perhaps but tonight you bend no grass about me, you rowdy my griefs with your elsewhere, hard, soft, bitch, love. Nothing but love. Love. But love. Love. Nothing but love. Hard, soft, bitch, love.

Surrender like grey patches across a dream's withdrawal, there is no other way, none other path toward softness, through liberation. Surrender. Do you know this yet?

"I know"
"Act"
"I am"

Walk toward where Luna T's Cafe used to end & discover how it does no longer. Extends on as far as one is able to perceive & possibly beyond & on.

Where & when it began no longer matters or at least does not gesture toward where tis bound. A psychedelic dream, more. I can no longer write in the same way am learning to write beyond & on, the music of else, I nod simply, what words? None, & yet always more.

Hard, soft, bitch, love.

I breathe you tonight call it fire death love—

or not know what to call it, or what it is, or who you are, or how I accelerate or stumble—

Dream simple: a rushing raving pen, a beloved to curl arms & dreams with, an ongoing task to gift the Universe from within—let flow rush giggling mad each way—

the drinkers at Luna T's bar in near-unison toast me—at least I mean well or something like it—

A day or two pass & a vision while journeying, purging, & again she manifests—

now what, Rebecca?
things will happen fast
I hope so I'm tired
don't worry
does she love me?
you know the answer
tell me
yes she does she never stopped

what do I do now?
Just wait. She's letting herself hope again.
So what do I do?
Write, Raymond. Do what the world demands but mostly write. Stay true.
Are things really going to get better?
You know they are. The psychedelic vision you had was a gift & a promise. She knows how true you've been.

Lisa.
Raymond.
I love you.
I love you too.
I never stopped.
Neither did I.

She pulls me deeper into embrace, her teeth gleaming with hunger & fear, forgotten the where & when, we fall continuously as her fingers etch my back with possession & we lose light & lingua, I love you, I love you, love you, love you, love, love, you, you, breasts, touch, acceleration, symbiosis, bite, lick, what to do next, love you, you, love you, every day, every hour, heal, love, heal, love, hope the open hand fist, what to do next

Just wait. Hope shimmers, arises.
Nears.

More days pass.
"Rebecca"
"Yes?"
"You were right, things are going faster"
"I know. You're scared"
"Yes. Hopeful & scared."
"She is too but she's clearer now. She knows she wants you, that her happiness is with you."
"How far can my honesty go?"
"She's waiting now but it's OK. She'll wait for you. She knows you're coming, that's all that matters to her."
"Why am I scared?"
"This is the heart of things for you. No going back. This is why you moved 3000 miles. Your dream is coming alive."
"How is she?"
"Better than a few days ago. She knows it's as real for you still as it is for her. She knows."
"It can work?"
"Yes!"
"What do I do?"
"Oblige the world when you have to. But save your core for Lisa Marie & your Art & hers. She wants to be an Artist, she means it. She's started writing again. Raymond just be true. That's what she believes with all her being you are, that's what's keeping her hopeful & going. You're being true to her & her seeing this is where she is starting anew, building her world."

"Lisa Marie, I love you so much!"
"Raymond ☺ I love you!"
"We build our world together again."
"Yes. Always."
"Every moment I think of you. There's nothing else really."
"I know. I'm waiting. I'm very impatient but I don't care. I'll wait for you. You waited for me. You never stopped."
"I want to marry you."
"You already did."
"Again."
"Yes."
"I LOVE YOU SO MUCH ☺"
"I LOVE YOU" ☺

Luna T's toasts & cheers again. In my own world it rains & I have to go back to job. In both I am nearing happiness.

She pulls me deeper into embrace a sudden whirl of wings outward from a bench where we lean kissing & I keep reading the word faith in my notebooks on nights now & then wheezy coinpurse silly slumping bed she pulls me deeper into embrace I read the words & think: power? magick? prayer? She's pulling me back from the flutter's leap & here is the bench again
    oh, hello
she's smiling at me from that
direction, oh hurry oh patience

I walked into a bookstore tonight & laughed how I don't belong—laughed how many bound there don't belong as well

send every other page fluttering up in a desert flame smiling flickers of song

the band joins in Noisy Children since 1981 strumming percussive humming to my words another bus we're riding another dream opened up for its deepest cries

organ, bass, guitars, drum I feel them corrode the page another bus we approach the poor part of the city another city

she told me as I hurried wet staggering patience Raymond, remember?
        Yes I will

I look at Rebecca, another day has passed.
    "She's still with another but now she wants to meet me for lunch"
    "Yes"
    "& signs her notes 'Love Always'"
    "Yes"
    "Tell me"
    "You know"

"Patience?"
"More than that"
"No way out but through?"
"More"
"I don't know"
"The door is open between you but it's up to you to decide how & when & if to walk through."
"I want to, but not to be crushed again."
"Why do you want to?"
"I don't know. I'm very lonely. I miss her. We built up a dream I've never forsaken."
"You need to know why it still lingers?"
"Yes. Why."
Rebecca resembles Lisa, is older by 5 years but it hardly matters. I don't know which one I'm talking to.

"Raymond"
"Yes."
"Do you love me?"
"Yes. Always."
"I love you too"
"I don't know what you want, Lisa."
"To see you. Everything."
"Me too. But you could hurt me very bad."
I stop. "But I suppose I could you too. I don't think of that."
"It's true."
"But I haven't"
"That's even worse. That's what I can't get over, you haven't hurt me ever. You love me. I don't deserve it but I want it so badly again."
"That's work & difficulty. You'll have to decide, & I will too—"
"I think we'll decide yes"
"I hope so."
"I have more faith than you, Raymond"
"I suppose you do"
"That's funny."

"I'll get you back, Raymond. I will. Nobody will stop me. I want you with me. My life is wrong. I want to be happy again. I'll do what I have to do.
"I want you so much. My heart hurts so badly. I have to be with you. I have to do this. No more waiting."

One day you disappeared into a dream & for a moment I stood watching then followed then ran then flew then I learned it was more than any of this it was necessary to reinvent myself & the world & I ran & then flew—

later on in another dream we met & several after that we didn't wake, waking didn't catch & hold & you kept disappearing & I kept following then running then flying trying to reinvent but not quite

til it seemed there was nothing but dreams dreaming dreamers dreaming dreams but no you finally said No & NO! & NO! you finally screamed you had no choice you had to be real again

now we look upon each other through a reality still riffing with dreams but waking in pieces & patches a new kiss burst like first dawn & then this & that Lisa Marie my wife mate muse best friend

"Yes, Raymond"
"There is no world we can live in that does not begin with us twined & true"
"Yes"
"I want & worry but you are learning how to be true in a way that will not falter"
"Yes"
"I'm scared still"
"I know. I'll take care of that. You'll see."
"I love you so much."
"I know. You've won me. Don't worry. I am with you forever. Nobody could take me away again. I'm your girl. That's all that matters."

I look at Rebecca. She nods.
"What do I do, Reb?"
"She's doing it. Right now. She's making things ready for you & her to be together."
"What do I do?"
"Trust. Be happy."
"I'm trying."
"She knows. She's a shaman, Raymond. You've known that all along. When two shamen meet & bond no force living or elsewise can keep them divided."
"I wasn't sure."
"You were, the better part of you, but you were scared."
"I still am."
"There's no real reason anymore. She's chosen you as her mate. You are both two & one now."
"Can I help at all doing what she has to?"
"Think of her. She feels it. She feels everything between you now. Sometimes she's dizzy in love with you. Sometimes she's quiet & deep. It's all the same, though, & it's a constant."
"Dizzy?"
"Yes. She's a girl after all. You have no idea how deep her attraction is to you is. The other had to pretty much keep her hostage to ward you off'
"Meaning?"
"He mesmerized her into building her own cage, stepping in it, locking it. His own power is dark & potent."
"And now?"
"It's broken. Never again."
"How did it break?"
"Love. True love. She knows you never gave up. She knows you kept her better image in your heart, saved it for her to return to & retrieve."
"What do we do?"

"For awhile not so much. Sending him away will tire her deeply. She is more tired than she will say. But she will do this. This is her fight for her soul back, that's foremost. She will win. She knows her first reward is being with you. But she's saving herself."
"I just love her as I have & do?"
"Yes. That's all she wants. She has to be her own person & win this battle for herself. But she feels you within too & that keeps her strong. He knows he's lost, but he won't let it not be nasty. His taste for the fight is over though. Days, a couple of weeks at the most. She'll tell you as she wishes. Just listen."
"Then?"
"She wants to live with you & make a sacred space. She sees already the home you & she will share. She could draw it if she wanted to."
"What else?"
"She has strong desires for you but isn't sure how best to pursue them. She wants to heal, to hold hands, to be safe. But she also wants your child. She also wants things so primordially erotic she can't name them. They have no names. She yearns for a shared private place with you."
"And the other?"
"She has withdrawn from him. There's relief, for both of them. A part of him once loved her but he knows she can't be what he needs. He's tired of pushing as much as she's tired of being pushed. There will be better days for all when he's moved on. He took out on her his anger & bitterness. Then she refused it anymore. Now there's little left. She let herself be hurt for hurting you."
"Me?"
"Yes. There never was a reason she left you. She knew she had blown it, & let him & life punish her. But now she wears the green & orange bracelet you gave her & she hopes & she works on this new life she'll have with you. She's waking up to you like she's always wanted."

"Lisa"
"Raymond"
"Are you there?"
"Yes"
"Is all this true?"
"Yes"
"All this is deeper & stranger than anything previous in my life"
"I know. It's OK. I love you."
"I love you."
"Good. Cuz I'm yours & you're mine. That's it, Raymen. Forever."
"Yes"
"So be happy!"
"I am."
"Good ☺"
"Yes ☺"

To play one true note. To play her very own, play it from sweat & desire, from dreams of trees acres unbound by names & borders, play it like his sudden kiss natural & righteous

play her one true note then watch it spike & spider into several, ache o yes like always but more too tonight she feels clarity flow through her, sugar & magick of freedom, she looks at me across hours & miles

you are my one true note I am yours feel this how it beats feel this how it warms quickly feel this how we curl ever among each other feel this within me you see best

one true note, feel it blow up, feel it madden, feel its glee, she increases, not hurrying, expands with knowing's ease, she looks toward me with glow & hunger what we are

greatens, call it miracle, ocean, the still bright dance of full moon, I love you, I love you, a plain kiss's ecstasy, wherefrom its roots? whereto its leaves? I love you. Plain & golden.

Freckles & soft hands, a smile that whirls around the setting square, hazel eyes, explosion of love for you a thousand times a day, marry me, marry me, we married so so long ago, every day, forever, yes, my love, yes, yes,

I want to wake in your arms
I want to name stars after your laughter
I want to watch you climb higher
    lead me leading you

This love cannot stop its rushes with the force of a being thrust from egg or womb

I worship you as resembling sacred & silly things both marry me marry me marry me marry me

Luna T's Cafe shakes as the several DJs mixing from various quadrants in the bandroom synch, synch deeper, a shift, a click, now beyond synch the stage falls away into jungle into mountain into sky

how I love you how you touch me tonight as this armchair & that voice & that lampshade wish to—how we blend like a chorus, I love you see us hurry in our thinking slowness, feel what blows up brighter carrying us whirling in song

I love you & yes & please &
    divinity & you near me
  & take me along & I watch
    you from within

& you feel this ink burning
  & you feel my heart simple
      as life wanting & wishinhg

marry me marry me marry me
      we did this moment
    again & forever

To play one true note she holds her pen doubtfully I say trust, sing. I say: be true. Be true to yourself, Lisa Marie, the gold & artist within. Be true. Trust. Sing.

Her pen dips within & commences I recede into blur into deep quiet she writes a little, now more, now seeks deeper, finds, plunges & surfaces, rises making's heat, a shiver, two, she presses long harder, yes, she remembers, this is what it's like, what she is, one true note blowing up into a thousand, yes, one true note, she's playing her one true note, ha ha ha this is what it means

too many DJs & drummers to count, a flourish & more of stars, & courting & upholding her words as they scorch forth Noisy Children licking guitars & organ & bass before & around her

I said: this woman queens my Art, muse & Artist, the Universe's gift to me & challenge, let all lift up as she rises

tribal beats, electronic pathways & tunnels, rock rhythms & muscle, & my pen a black comet weaving & tickling—serve her, companion her, learn as her words unfurl, learn, listen

human suns swerve & move into latent spaces—another word, another—serve her, love her—another, another—

In my greatest acceleration, as I push harder, deeper, whisper's touch, roar's thrust, will I ever wholly uplift you, protect you invisibly, thrill even your dream of me, enough, will it ever be enough?

light soft as flaming wax, these words scrawled harshly into fog, I approach you, through madness & magick, anguish & anticipation, shedding sinews & blue fancies, approach you toward a better dance to be, our love gleaming & crackling with liberation's happy rage, forgetting your name, my own, the whatever of human history, grey tales of heave & hunger

better to know nothing but love with you, to know nothing else at all, you keep writing, words let forth in flourish & squeak, I approach you love as you approach me, questions hung from dripping branches, answers as many as my dreams of your freckles, beat, beat, beat, many's many, approach you with words of feathers & chords of glass, nearing you, yes—

"It's OK, Raymen"
"I can't say it's big enough for you, Lisa"
"You do. I feel it. Now. I feel what you're always writing"
"I think I worship you through Art & something more wordless"
"I know. Like spells."
"Is it OK? I don't know how else to be anymore"
"Yes, it's fine. I want to do it too. I'm still learning."
"You know it all within, though."

I look at Rebecca, stumbling.

"It's OK" she says surrounded by her painting now globs of color awaiting her will "You're getting it. She feels how you are getting it. It pleases her, that you won't let up, want to know better."
I nod a bit.
"Raymond" she says "Be true. Trust. Sing."

Sitting mere miles from you I feel your movements, tribes them continuous flow, feel your warmth, your blood, my blood, feel what connects us, magick, words, laughter—empathy, music—& I say I love you to fill spaces along the circuit between us—knowing it will return to me in your voice—I send continuously & receive—we speak to each other in song unruptured—I say I love you & it flutters to you & I receive I love you & it whisps through me & I know no other way to be this is our joined am, this is what our is is—the words kissing this page each one for you our am this is we are, this is truth and shard of truth for no matter the pages there is more there is what can be spoken of over & over, & other things which do not pass through language on way to truth—

I tell you: I love you, Lisa Marie Zent
You tell me: I love you, Raymond Soulard Jr.

Wiggle, grasp, climb, stand. The Cafe window shows me a wet street on Christmas Eve 2002 & this place is called Heaven. Everywhere, Heaven. The damp street sometimes trafficked & Heaven is on slow grooving waves higher & lower faces come & go & I sit reading a book when not painting these pages in black-colored notes—

I want to bring you to Luna T's Cafe, to Bags End, to the varied places my notebooks have become soil & sun for—I want to see your wedding ring—the one I gave you—within my hand's grasp—you are my mate I am yours—whatever others are there is the am we are, the is we have forged—I believe this—I ask:

Universe protect my Lisa Marie &
  bring our love to greater fruition
Universe protect my Lisa Marie &
  bring our love to greater fruition
Universe protect my Lisa Marie &
  bring our love to greater fruition
Universe protect my Lisa Marie &
  bring our love to greater fruition
Universe protect my Lisa Marie &
  bring our love to greater fruition
Universe protect my Lisa Marie &
  bring our love to greater fruition

I say it, I sing it, wondering at what these stories once were & what they've become—how this story 243 pages, 2 years & 3 months along is not who it was when I began it—Noisy Children I've released to live as they will—I have released them all—they stay near because I wish but not will—

there is no book such as this one & it is less than half done—could very easily take years more to compose—years & miles—I only have one necessary reader anymore & I wonder when she will read this—what she will think—what she will say—tonight my longing for you deepens, Lisa, is that possible? Yes, my true love, I feel it—the great green power of love—mmmmmm . . . . . .

Flow just flow teach me how I only know pen & longing, cavern & rhythm, all else I fear, flee, all else opens out & collapses

Her painting follows her as she walks deeper & deeper into Luna T's I follow bodiless & questions, teach me how, flow just flow, not sure who I'm following or why

but always like this way imagining guru shaped in pink flash & curves & pursuit she accelerates & I do too

I don't know how or why just pen & longing, cavern & rhythm, follow her deeper she lets me near cannot help but let me near the pressure to release to me greatens unto yowl

I love you spoke back & forth & how what hardens & how what smooths & slicks I love you spirals back & forth & there is cry for possession for deeper groans of touch I want her to blindly cry my name say it I belong to you SAY IT I BELONG TO YOU SAY IT AGAIN I BELONG TO YOU RAYMOND YOU SHARE ME AS YOU WISH

I'll burn it all down every fucking notebook kill til I am killed die torn several pieces from each other say it again

I LOVE YOU I'M YOURS YOU SHARE ME AS YOU WISH

sometimes a jungle, sometimes a beach, her painting swishes & merges & say it again to every beat of your heart say it new & ever is this how to flow just flow is this how?
A night of rainy talk with a luminous tramp singer & he tells me something that drifts along with me a day later perhaps beyond he says desire hooks remains that one possesses, is possessed, desire blows up within, resonates of its own accelerating energies—

"Raymond"
"Yes"
"You worry too much"
"I worry a lot. Comes of living too close to the margins, sleeping alone night after night, wondering if it will ever cease"
"Your time is due"
"Yes. It is. Are you Rebecca or Lisa?"
"Yes. You knew that."
"I suppose I did."
"What can I do?"
"Stop leaving me in silence for days. Stop leaving me with my speculations."
"I love you. I'm going to be with you. Why are you so worried?"
"I don't have amnesia"

"Meaning?"
"All these months of pain & rejection, over & over."
"That's over. I know I want you. I'm not fighting it anymore"
"You won't stop me stressing til things are substantially better"
"They already are!"
"I'm still waiting."
"I am too."
"Just contact me."
"I will."
"Do you feel this between us?"
"*Yes*. It scares me. We're crazy, Raymond."
"I know. I like it."
"I do too. Be patience please."
"I want you as my wife. There's no retreat from that."
"I know. I remember too."
"I need your truth."
"You have it."
"Now, tonight. Stop making me wait"
"I will."
"Who do you belong to?"
"You"
"Who claims your heart above all?"
"You."
"Who calls you wife now and always?"
"You."
"Say it"
"I am your wife now & always"
"Call me husband"
"Husband"
"Who protects you?"
"You."
"Who do you belong to?"
"I belong to Raymond."
"Who have you given your heart?"
"Raymond"
Say it
I've given my heart to Raymond.
Call me.
Yes.
Make gone that which keeps you from me.
Yes. Fuck me.
No.
Fuck me!
No. Not until you are mine in the view of all.
Raymondd ☹
Do it. Whose bed do you wish?
Raymond's.

Whose arms do you wish?
Raymond's.
Whose touch?
Raymond's.
Where?
Everywhere.
Get what's between us gone. Now.
I will. I swear.
I love you.
Please don't leave me.
Do what you swear.
I will. Please don't leave me.
Get what's between us gone. *Now*.
I will. I love you.
I love you. But this period ends. Then you sleep in my arms.
Yes. That's what I need. Help me.
It's simple. End it. Now. Then come to me. I'm waiting.
I will.
Who do you belong to?
You.
Who?
YOU!
WHO?
You, Raymond forever.
Yes.
I'll do it. I swear.
Do it or you will lose me.
Raymond ☹
Do you want that?
No ☹
Do what's right. One way or another.
I want you so bad.
Then it's time.
Please don't leave me. Don't say it at all. I'll do it. I swear.
Good.

Open conjuration pen to paper let they & that between us fall away that our path is plain.

None deterring us labors righteously & must stand aside I press & pray the Universe make this so.

To the Universe I pledge my devotion to healing & loving she who is my mate, all Nature as I am able, & this world in its troubles & fortunes. Open conjuration pen to paper: let what wrongly claims cease & pass elsewhere.

I beg thee, Universe: harm nobody in cleansing & opening path between me & my Beloved. Pity ignorance & selfishness thrust it painlessly aside. My pledge is our pledge: to teach, to

heal, to love. To sing, greater & greater, to become profounder instrument for Thine goodly Songs.

Universe, we choose to serve by Singing.

Open conjuration I love this woman with all my heart, & she loves me with all hers, we wish to contrive from our shared life, our shared bed. Let us join in love & healing, be greater than our mere separate sufferings. Please, Universe, I humbly ask Thee for our reunion & deepening.

Let us reunite & learn how to heal & love, how to give to others of our great good energy—let me kneel before my Beloved & submit my love to her tending—let her receive my love & pledge my healing—let this be so & true, Universe.

Open conjuration I ask that what interferes be pushed aside to seek other ends, let what impedes find other concerns & goals. Universe I ask thee to bring my Beloved Lisa Marie Zent to me & bless us & keep us that we may serve thine ends & each other. I ask this with my hope & humility both. I ask that my Beloved join me & be my Wife as always desired, & we may begin to begin again. Thank you.

"Rebecca"
"I'm here"
"How do I do better?"
"Just do"
"*How*"
"Faith. Act in faith."
"Am I OK?"
"You're trying."
"I feel stretched to breaking"
"You're not. Not even close."
"Does she feel me?"
"More than ever."
"Silence?"
"It won't last."
"Bad things?"
"In a way. Remember: you've done nothing wrong. Be true."
"I'm flailing"
"You're not."

"Raymond."
"Lisa."
"I need you to believe."
"It hurts."
"I know."
"A friend says see other girls."
"You won't"
"No."

"What do I DO?"
"Be true to me. Like always. Our reunion is pretty close."

"Rebecca"
"Yes"
"Will things keep getting worse?"
"No."
"Just like that? No?"
"Right"
"The hours crawl"
"Yes. There's no point you writing this right now."
"Why?"
"You have your answers: she loves you, you're going to see her. Things will begin to obviously improve. You'll see."
I nod, & stop writing.

"OK, Rebecca, you were right"
"No, you were"
"And now?"
"Acceleration. You know that."
"Now?"
"Yes."

"Raymen"
"Lisa"
"You're OK?"
"I'm trying."
"Good. Now most of all. It's happening & I want to make sure of you. When I jump you have to catch me."
"Yes."
"And this time I'm staying with you."
"Yes. I love you."
"I'm going to take care of you. Don't worry. My dream is going to happen."
"of us?"
"Of course. All that matters. Well, the most important. You're my husband, I have to take care of you & me first."
"Yes."
"Just catch me. I'll make the rest happen. I'm ready."

"Rebecca."
"Raymond"
" "
"It's OK. It's been hard. Keep riding."
" "
"Yes. I know. Just do what she says: catch her."
"She tells me to relax."
"Yes."

"When she's in our bed, all the covers pulled over to her side. Making me sing to her."
"Yes. I know. It's happening."
" "
"Just catch her. She knows what she's after. She's been planning toward this her whole life."
" "
"Just catch her. Say it."
"Just catch her."
"Just catch me, Raymen."
"I will."

Sitting at Luna T's Cafe bar, reading *Deus Irae* by Philip K. Dick & Roger Zelazny.

"Dick. Stephen King," Americus smiles some.

"Neruda too. Books on conspiracy theory. Psychedelics & rock music. The 60s."

He nods.

"I have to prepare for her. That means money as much as my heart."

Nods again. Sips his Guinness. I have cola.

Mr. Bob faces us, settles himself, as rarely, on a stool on his side of bar. "It's hard, son. You invent a life as much from money as dreams."

I nod.

"She's worth it. Do you understand this?"

They're all staring at me.

I nod. "I know."

"She loves you. She isn't kidding. Forget her age. Her love is a woman's."

"Yes."

"It scares you."

"Yes."

"Yet it's all you ever wanted. You *asked* for this. You conjured before you knew you could."

"I did."

"She loves you no matter what, & she is fast approaching you. But your fear is man's fear, old, primordial. A man protects his woman, his family."

"She's protecting me too, even now in ways I can barely sense."
"Yes but there is an aspect to all of this you must do. Your worth as a person in your world has been something you've long doubted."

"Yes."

"She is preparing a nest for you & her. It's money, part of it, she accepts this more easily than you. But she knows it's more."

"What then?"

"There's a place within her only you have seen, & only in glimpses. Not a garden but . . . a wilderland. Hunger, wound, joy, want. When a woman prepares this for a man he is her chosen one. Our kind of words lessen, diminish nearer this place. You have never been so chosen before, none of your previous women, each of them eventually withdrew. This woman . . . she tried too . . . unlike the others, it failed. She learned this. She chooses you by will & compulsion both. Likewise, you have chosen her. The two of you are already mates. All that you will ever share has begun to flourish."

I look around the bar. Rebecca—Lisa Marie that is—each, both—sits next to me—listening too—

"I woke at dawn yestermorn & prayed to be forgiven my life that I could freely & fully love my mate. Forgiveness was granted—I was told to go love her—give her everything—try to be happy—"

Listening.

"My humility has—my lack of it rather—has kept me from doing what I must. My father struggled with this too but he provided for his family. My mother stoody by him & helped—they succeeded—but together—"

I look at Lisa Marie—you, tonight, my love, so near—

"Once I nearly married a woman who was like my mother but wrongly—she was my mother's fear, bitterness—

"I vowed to triumph on my escape—& prayed for a different kind of woman—a partner, a lover, a friend, a muse—"

I look deeper at you. " I wanted the best of my parents' union—the refusal to quit, the loyalty—"

"What I longed for was to have a woman who would inspire me to keep swinging as my mother inspired my father—to free myself of the pain of their lives but not the lesson of what they accomplished—

"That's why you. I feel in us power hardly yet unleashed, love wild & furious to manifest, joy, laughter, hunger—

"We have what is needed to survive it all"

"Yes, Raymond"

"I've never had a woman like that"

"I know. I'm her. You belong to me. The rest don't matter. For either of us."

"I need you."

"I need you."

"Come to me."

"I am."

Serve the muse, teach her, elude her, be hers, lay out the beasts of if & maybe & let her slay them, serve her by saying: dance for my music alone or I will cease playing.

Nod to the band & they roar upwards swirl by trigger, now point upward & the moon drips down from overhead, this is what it means to possess power, to conjure openly

dance for me alone or dance for nothing—
Paint to the stars & they detonate at my word . . .
LOVE!

I can't write as I used to & I don't know how I'll write soon—know nothing—

Dance for me alone, dance wild, submit to my song to blow it up greater, submit to my song to have it, have my song, become it, become me,

Dance for me, dance for my fingers & eyes, dance for this hungry soul within your own

Approach me with love & submission as I approach you with need & humility

I'm scared, Raymond. I'm scared of everything.

Cross the line, Lisa. Jump it I will catch you. Jump toward your life as you've tried to jump to your death.

I'm afraid.

You have no choice.

Dance for me alone & see how this dance manifests you, see how your beauty supernova surreality how the shine stella mania is your soul new, uncovered, go, yes, say yes

Noice Children: Rock harder!
Moon: Tremble!
Stars: Be True!

I'm scared.

Do you trust me?

Yes. I don't know. Yes.

I'm waiting. My arms are out for you. Your life awaits. You know it does.

You'll catch me? You swear?

With all I am, with all I will ever be.

I want you so badly.

I'm waiting.

Serve the muse another level here as I strive to know, love the trees shaking by hands unseen, the trust we call wind.

The coins I lack, the woman my bed lacks, & my pen growls & hurries on, the knowing I strive toward in rhythm & chime—

mercy & release, the dream toward a nearing day, a bed of sunlight, a woman golden repose in dreaming I sit here now in a plastic Cafe & etch & awl onward

I compose songs from questions & lack

Love sticks hard. We need to keep breathing.

"Yes" She says
"Tonight I am desperate. There's no reason left for me to write. None. I'm empty."

"No, you're not. I'm with you more than ever. Your faith is true & right"
"I am lost"
"I am coming to you"
"Help me, Lisa"
"I will"
"Are you happy?"
"No. I will be."
"How?"
"You. Me. Us."
"I don't know what or how."
"Keep breathing. Be true."

Keep breathing. Be true. Love sticks hard. I want to marry you. I don't know how to stop loving you.

"Don't stop. Ever."
"I don't know anything."
"I love you. I know things seem bad but I love you. Nothing has changed in my heart, Raymond."
"Where are you?"
"I don't know."
"Find me."
"I know. I have to."

Love sticks hard. Faith, furious to make the world right at last.

"I will find you. I swear."

"Rebecca"
"It's all true. The hurt & the hope. All of it. The ready to jump. The hesitation. The good presses toward you."
"No."
"Yes. There's nothing left but submission. This your dream. Here it's coming"

What burns in you is beauty, Americus nods, the band lifts off seamlessly, I can't cry for what I do not mourn, lifts off & the sound so heavy the audience raises up with them, what lives broadens & greens, the drinkers listening from the Cafe's bar through propped open door nod & sip harder, I burn more confessions partway to paper than I'll ever be able to reckon, the drinkers ignore the TV & radio & jukebox & world beyond that other door upon hearing Noisy Children lift, the world is worth loving but what a cost in doing so!

No song yet just a rock conflagration rising on a slow & slow bass & beat, a gyrating float through green & brown & black

She looks across me within me & smiles, I call it possession but this word whimpers & slips away

Rebecca nods at me: a happenstance of knowing.

Americus suddenly at the microphone sings fist opening out:

"Here comes old Flattop he comes
grooving up slowly he got juju
eyeballs he want holy roller
he got hair . . . down . . . to his knees
got to be a joker he just do
what he please . . . "

Steps back, something else happens, some other song or way, it's easy, a jam invisibly tight arriving lustrous constant

I love you charred figure changing goldensong love you / and / and / is 3 boom shakalaka boom shakalaka she squeezes me again & listens—

what burns in you is beauty &
I submit again in a new way—
always another new way exists—

"The nature of things is in the habit
of concealing itself"
Heraclitus, Fragment 54

Philip K. Dick asks: if time can turn into space, can space turn into time?

Americus nods again & the music hovers suddenly in space I feel her wedding bond about me tonight as despair sits near me dank coffeehouse again

I look at Rebecca, she sighs, there's nothing she can add to the hope she's offered—we walk deeper into Luna T's Cafe, holding hands—

"Where is she?"
"Returning from a familiar dark place"
"When?"
"Soon"
"How will I know?"
"You feel it already"
"What can I do?"
"Work. Wait. Stay near. She'll find you. She always does."

A field, night, full moon, surrounded by trees—dancers around a fire, drummers—we all ate sacraments, smoked others—

Rebecca sways, leading me, I let her diminish—I know this place & time—years & miles away yet near still—nearer lately—

I died here, Lisa, danced & died & was reborn with the light—my travels to the dark place passed through here—

I know you can hear me within you—calling for you, saying I love you over & over—

I feel you, how you cry & hurt, struggle, wonder where you are, wonder where I am—lately I've felt like you are returning again too—like you once more feel my presence—

my days have been difficult too but I say to you: faith love hope, love most of all—you're alive, you're returning—

I am waiting.

Someone I loved & relinquished long ago came to me & said: don't let it go this time, & again regret infinitely—& you came to me another day & said our story is bigger than this moment—

two weeks now silence—a month since I've seen you—

I am true.

"I envisioned her at dawn, instructed her to banish the intruder & come to me after"
"She heard"
"Will she?"
"Yes."
"The world tempts me to leave my suffering"
"The world is less"
"I know."
"You suffer for the love you've always sought"
"When?"
"Soon"
"Rebecca—"
"This is Lisa Marie"
"Come to me"
"I am"
"Please"
"Yes"
"No more waiting"
"I know."

Mostly the dread of a late night room, no face nearby, voice's rhythm & music, smoking TV dope til I near passing out, sometimes a book if pages found crazy enough to understand—no phone messages—no friendly sounds—how I run to this room from the strange city & how I feel choked nearly upon arrival—

chanting hope's choiceless spell—day by day by day—with no answers, chanting—

less & less able to talk to faces even as I desire them—what would I say? I am suffering for a love unending? who does that? what for? I do.

in a crowded bus breathe the loneliness—feel empathy in silence—stumble on—do the work—chant hope's choiceless spell—

chant hope's choiceless spell—believe while scarring despair worsens—believe while faces about me diminish to things—believe as affliction, as peril, as remaining hope

when the heart is breaking & the dream tattered annihilation murmurs its luring music—

I resist—

By steps taken one two a dozen by fool's work for a pittance done, by pen's fitful long-lived prayer

by ragged sleep—by roaring dream

last night smoke filled the kitchen, upstairs, Mrs. Freeman's boarding house, I dealt with it, held open a door, waited, checked, checked again—

I resist—I believe—it hurts—

this story begs for more—a beagle sits in my lap quietly—a wheelchaired man waits—the band plays quietly—

Rebecca nods "Believe. You have no choice. You have no other hope."

I offer you again & always my freakish heart & you again & always accept & offer your freakish heart to me in return & again tonight I sleep alone with our love shit fuck it's true you love me do

Rebecca giggles.

"Lisa Marie"
"Raymen Marie"
"Wife"
"Husband"
"I believe tonight"
"I do too"
"I feel your witchy presence"
"I feel yours"
"Me a witch?"
"As much as me. Our spell is mutual, Raymond."
"I didn't think of it that way"
"It's true. You know me deep down, I feel you. That's why I'm yours forever."

"What now?"
"It's time for me to claim you. I'm more free that I was but until I am with you I am not totally free."
"Being with me."
"I choose you."
"I choose you."
"All that matters is this, Raymond. I had to leave home to start getting free, but I'm not totally free yet."
"I'm part of your freedom."
"Yes, of course. Your love doesn't hurt me. Everybody else had. You're the one. I found you by staying alive. Now I want to keep you."
"I didn't give up, Lisa. It was hard but I just couldn't."
"I know. You love me totally like I love you."
"What do I do?"
"Don't stop loving me totally. Ever but especially now. Stay in Portland. Be as patient as you can be. I'm taking care of all this, Raymond. Just be ready for me. I'm going to make it good for us again."
"And him?"
"I knew you would ask. He's pathetic, Raymond. It won't be long. I want my true Valentine with me."
"You mean all this?"
"Yes. I love you, nobody else. Let me do all this the way I have to."

I offer you always & again my freakish heart & you always & again accept & offer me your freakish heart in return & again tonight I sleep alone swathed in our love as you near me hungrier than ever.

I don't know if anyone will read these pages, make anything of them at all. Once this was a story, part of a series of stories I'd been writing since about 1981, that's 22 years ago now. I can't regard it as much of anything anymore save that on it goes for I have little else left. Fixtion can near fact til it crosses over, is, in fact, fact.

Somewhere there is still a story here—of a bar, a group of people, some ideas about human living & reality, but mostly no. Mostly it's just me now, approaching 39 years old the hard way, stubborn & struggling. Unwilling to let go my dignity or dreams.

I sat here watching a father & his daughter, she about 4, talking & laughing, & I know I can't have that now maybe ever, someone dependent on me.

All I really have, that's mine, that matters, are my notebooks, the press of pen to paper. A project called *6 x 36 Nocturnes*, nearing 3 years in the making, nearing done. More difficult because nearing done, heavy with its history, its thrust. Will be 360 poems when done, is now just 26 short of that goal. Nothing else concretely keeps me alive.

This story twines with that poetry book—but this story is no story & does not keep me alive; it doesn't matter.

I am dead. Not yet. But I feel its tug. Once people held me back, a few years ago, the thought of loved ones grieving me. Now they don't. I'm near my end of believing in human love. Not that I deserve what I want or need. But I do; everyone does.

I'm lost yet on I walk. A dream got me, has me yet. I believed; I still do. I still believe.

Loved ones have done what they could; it's not enough. My mind cogitates how to keep going anyway; it's what minds do. To finish my poetry book.

Who would read 271 pages of this junk to arrive at this paragraph?

I came here for you, Lisa, my true love, my angel, & these many days near but not with you have corroded me, sheared my faith, what remains bright & small, a tangled remain of hope & diminishment

I fight the dwindling—I weaken—I fight more—

a buzz, a spark, hesitant notes on a piano—

a world, of land sea & sky, beyond that of men & women

breathe slow, slower, glimpse it, its velvet moments & chanting rain, keep breathing, for release, & connection, keep breathing

More colors. Wilder music. The beginning of a new freedom. Near me, true love. Bells within ringing of fear & freedom, near me. Let our pending world begin.

Universe I pray you give her the trust she needs, let her cross deeply enough into faith, let her hope flare—

Universe, I pray you press me on however hurtfully into deeper faith—I stagger about its margins—I long not for the dull of capitulation but the fierce of vigil

Universe let us let this new world begin—the heart is its own most fell haunting—no more—let the worst diminish just enough

Noisy Children strums & taps softly—
was I speaking?

This faith let it nudge greater, enough & slightly more—Universe I pray for enough & slightly more

a pause, awhile, a rusty drunken Native American hiccups & mourns his mother, & something further, I listen then lose into old poems, pain so fueling aliveness so much our loves we grant its honored dwelling within, among, & between us—

It continues, Lisa, I don't know how or why—we—continue—

Rebecca
No, it's Lisa Marie. Talk to me.
The man who took you finally harmed you enough for authorities to move in.
Yes.
What can I do for you?
Stay in Portland. Love me like you always do. Like you want to. Like I want.
What do you want?
You. Us.
If you reject me I'm leaving.
I won't ever. I swear.
I want a life again.
I do too.
Lisa,
Raymond, it's OK. You waited, you believed in me. I'm coming back finally. You better take care of me.
Find me, Lisa, tonight.
I will.
Make me believe. I want to.
I will.
I want to.
I know.

Rebecca
"Yes"
Do I keep believing?
"What do you think?"
I have no choice.

Rebecca
Raymond
Who's this?
Me (giggle)
Me who?
Yes.
What next?
You know.
I don't.
Yes you do.
We meet?
Yes.
We kiss?
Maybe (giggle)
Sigh.
What's wrong?
I want this Real. I love you. Why aren't we in touch???
We are. Don't worry.

There had better be nobody else.
There isn't. I won't do that again. I hated it.
Valentine's day is two days away.
I know.
Don't forget me.
Raymen! I'm not forgetting you. I love you
I need to hear it. Lisa. I mean this
I know. I'm sorry it's slow. Things are hard. I'm not giving up though. I will have you & Destiny both.
Still both?
Yes. That's what I want.
—
What?
When is our time? When does the good finally happen for us??
It will. It is. Don't worry. I love you ☺
I love you too.
I love you more, Raymen. I always have.

"What can faith offer to no money for rent, & no word from beloved"
"Love what & who you can't help"
"& suffer on & on"
"There are things at work for you, Raymond. All's not as it seems"
"When do I see this bluntly?"
"When you are not looking, as always"

A rampage. A gleam. A way. Words again but no truths, no answers. Life busts forth many world. I call none home save pen on paper.

Rebecca says Don't look back; I think of someone dreaming me, or someone else. I think my pen will only continue if I let go & love forth.

Dr. Arnold T. Knickerbocker looks at me. **"You have no filled cup of truth to mull. You scramble from blackness to blackness."**
I nod. He doesn't continue.

Rebecca says Nothing is over though it might seem so—remember but don't look back—

"Paint—let me watch you"

Something perhaps coalesces, I feel tentative, barely able. A rampage stumbling. A gleam distracted. A way but invisible.

She paints slowly, nothing yet assembling.
"Maya" I say. She nods; that helps.

"Nothing ends in this moment or the next."
she accelerates, now two hands painting.

Talk to me, Raymond.
Say what, Lisa?
What you feel.
Lost. Empty. Angry. Wishing I could take you away.
Why can't you?
You'd say no.
Would I?
Engaged again?
Do you believe it's real?
Not really.
You're right.
Lisa, I can't trust anything anymore.
If you want to say it, do.
I will.
I know.
Don't kill yourself, Lisa.
Don't you either.
I love you.
I love you, too. I'll let you know.
Nothing's over. You know that.

Serve the muse third level. Hard as fuck choiceless how to persevere. My path points back to origins. My path passes through these again. My path goes elsewhere thereafter. Serve the muse. I don't know how. On it goes.

A new dream. A bigger dream. No longer a dream at all.

If someone else loves me—
"No, Raymond"
If someone else dreams of me—
"No. Please."
I'll not suffer like this unending, Lisa. Near a year of it.
"I'll find you. Promise. I will."
Time dwindles, Lisa. Relief wails higher.
"I'll find you."
I want to be happy again.
"I do too!"
Choose me bluntly or lose me to another who will.

I sleep lately so hard dreams don't crack open. Sleep is medicine. Travel. The oblivion of nature, mulled.

"Wait for me, Raymond"
Choose me bluntly & soon. Choose the world still firing between us. Your own healing. Love that does not crush.
"I know."

This time I will go.
"NO!"
Realize what you're doing.
"I do. I'm scared."
I'm going. You can come. That's all I can say. Or stay. Build your life from what you have.
"Raymond! ☹"
There's no length left for indecision.
"I want you!"
Act, Lisa.

New dream, bigger dream, no longer a dream at all. A novel, a confession, a mess. On it goes, as I have nothing else.
"I've always been in love with you
I guess you've always known it's true
You took my love for granted
Why oh why?
The show is over
Say goodbye . . .
Say goodbye . . .
Say goodbye . . ."
—a woman's smooth melancholia as I sit here wondering how nothing ends but I can't keep being so utterly grimily sad—

Tonight has happened before. Running on rims in some quiet desperate plastic joint
the hustle to keep the sacred wildly live within—balance coins & hearts & the freaks many moments explode with—
to believe without a shrine easily kneeled before
trees women music
feelings resembling ideas
full moon met again & again

hope blasts through me—I was singing & writing & suddenly a ragged group of thoughts shined singly within toward elsewhat—when—where—I don't know—

Nothing ends in this moment, yes, & everything widens illogically but OK pretty pretty pretty—

Someone someday may read these words—I hope so—I hope these pages travel on to impossible places & moments, to hardly imagined hands—

keep turning the corners—keep slaving for news of the how & why—sometimes hurry sometimes slow

A new being, rising. I call it love, the word familiar, but this not, this thing in me before me, what is it? It afflicts me, but claims to teach, to know.

A generosity at times angry, furious with the world for its cower, its insistence on the mythologizing of wounds, called history. Celebration of wounds, called religion. Tradition of wounds, called politics.

You were real, weren't you? You loved me, yes? You remember me? You'll remember me? I keep asking these kinds of questions but they aren't the right ones. Remembrance is wound too. The new being rising within demands more of me. Demands I remember, & hope, work but not expect. Demands I gather & cohere.

Work but not expect. Remember & hope.

The new being within is power I hardly know. Music, silence, generosity, wonder.

"Rebecca"
"No. It's Lisa. Talk to me."
"I have to go. I want you to come with me."
"I will. Do you still want me?"
"Yes. Why?"
"I feel like shit. I hate life. I hate everything."
"I love you."
"I hurt you. I hurt my beautiful Raymond."
"Be with me now. We can save everything"
"I love you so much."
"Lisa, it can be good again."
"You swear?"
"Yes. But we have to start somewhere."
"Connecticut?"
"Yes. I think it's a good idea. A way from all the drama."
"What do you want me to do?"
"Pack your bags. Call me. Take the bus to Seattle. We'll go from here."
"You promise?"
"Yes. I'm true. You know that."
"I'm so tired. I want to sleep in your arms, Raymond. I want happiness. I want you."
"Pack. Call. Bus. Come with me. Stay with me as long as you can. Want."
"Forever, Raymond. That's what I want."
"Me too. Now is time."

Rebecca.
She wants you, Raymond. Nothing will stop her. Nothing. You've told her what you have to. Let her do the rest.
Real this time?
Yes.
I hope so.

It is real, Raymond. This is Lisa Marie using your pen. It's real. I will come with you. I have to. I can't live like this anymore. I love you. I'm coming.

This universe a mist, a light, a shimmer, wish resembling remembrance, hunger ever by blood's chant & fingers' chasings, help me, help me, I see trees everywhere & they encourage, call me neither the fool nor the guru.

help me, help me, I keep feeling as I do, love for this pen scurrying, for a freckle faced woman-child who carries the best of me about, whose small hands I long for more than my own ceaseless continuance

help me, Universe, bring me her & all it will weight in my life ever after—bring me that I may vow fidelity in bringing her soup & chocolate, pledge faith in kisses small & embraces at the ready

She is my Art, who my Art has become she breathes my Art is moved into rhythms & melodies, songs of & for her. This love afflicts me without solve, door, else.

A mist, a light, a shimmer, & my hereon unimagined, my wish toward pathless wood

help me Universe she possesses me I no longer know how or why to live otherwise.

I cannot stop singing, the melodies keep bursting out, the rhythms persistent play me, hooks of making contrived as well from my pain as my delight—more & more, Art fuels my animation striding equal with bread blood & breath. Answers to my pining firm as stars but sometimes meteors, comets, sometimes craft metallic or poesy derived—day follows day follows day—the nights consume me at one end, new birth me at the other—

is it love anymore, Lisa, or myth? Is it mine or still ours? I cannot know certainly & the world drags me perpetually across its rutted scape, & how can I deny it drags you too? Would that you could say: I love you or I don't or save me or let me go—but you don't know, do you? All chorus badly in your gaze toward me—

I cannot stop singing as our sky does not clear, as I think: am I alone here? Is she beside me even now?

"Hey, man, are you against the War?"
"Young pup, there is nothing but war on this befouled mortal rock"
"How does it feel to have a president who is a lunatic?"
"Our Lord's myriad ways constitute greater lunacy than all else"
"Would you sign our petition to bring war crime charges against the American leaders?"

Dr. Arnold T. Knickerbocker raises his cane meaningfully toward the slim youth crusted in rings & ink designs. Said youth retreats agreeably, & quickly.

I call now a path, this brightly greet joint a path, the music strums the air with sugar, shaped laughter, & I think of you what of me you possess still, what remains beyond this, & love, a new being risen says I cannot tick or doodle my way to answers, that ticking & doodling leaves many unhappy they know not why, that I am gifted with the wish to do otherwise but the way I must make from my days, memories, dreams, where I scatter my love, on & on—

I look at old poems & how like a puppet I loved—like a puppet—I don't know what I know now that is better but the ticking & doodling is no longer enough, not a way, not even a hint—

how to live, how to live, how to live & why—leaving its time as a question behind, & now elsewhere—

Things change? Yes and no and both and neither and both or neither and yes or no and and and

I loved like a puppet—now something else—somewhere else—here, hereon—a new being, arisen, rising—

I say: I no longer know, am slipping away from what I was but I don't know what comes—the blankness fills every moment & I try to keep along—

something like a revelation or more in shards: moving me? with me?

I cannot see love possessing as failure even as it evolves—expand, diminish, change, & again, & again—I loved like a puppet, ticking & doodling—

Perhaps I'll not sit here after tonight for years—so I should say goodbye—this night its laughing female voices & questing chessgames & endless lovely rocksong air—but I cannot think goodbye it's not enough—feels like ticking & doodling—like a puppet's stupid great gesture—

new being, rising, is taking me through here & the lesson is not goodbye—again I watch the blankness fill up each moment—tap my foot, pay close mind, but—nothing further—as much of this moment, & this one, & this one, & on as I can—I fail to doodle & tick—at least that much—other than puppet, OK—

some mushrooms et a week ago & I saw all as illusion, again, something constructed by every creature in every form animate & inanimate: we all participate in making the world. We all touch all the time, affect each other all the time. The world is what we make it in our clashes & our harmonies. Nothing more or less than this. The world is one & many, a live infinite mist shaping & shaped-time & space given no order or examination—each connected to all, sizeless, ceaseless—

What use to think this way? I don't know. Beyond ticking & doodling, not a puppet, at least something other, but where & what & why? I feel myself falling back, clunk. From somewhere else to then. Clunk. Ouch.

submission release acceptance
liberation resistence etc etc
words: shed them, burn them, muzzle
them, mute them, la la la la

truth radiates—can be felt, received
but neither grasped nor kept—

Many eyes have passed leaving streaks of memory—eyes, trees, music, pain—& now newer things, wild & green—

one dreams of my scarred cheek
one poses as I brush
one shows me her shoulder beneath a dark blanket
one years me deepest in silence

I don't know what to give, what I wish, what the streaks of memory mean if anything at all—I don't know

Kindness & eros wrangle my will between them—urges to open out, to bloom, to blow the fuck up—urges to diminish, to still, to mourn alone & acknowledge alone & say all alone. all suffering. yes.

My bus travels east tomorrow by noon—my fave possessions traveling with me toward my many—my future receding, my past awaits—

time & space screwy ideas—wild swings at explaining the perpetually elusive—

Awhile sitting at the bar at Luna T's Cafe, a Sunday night, the place open & peopled on my behalf—the anger toward me—toward how I no longer write—it's gone—I'll find our way somewhere—

The TV shows grim American leaders unliked, unwell, paternal, authoritarian—clinging to the diminishing grey world as a greater, greener one bursts forth everywhere—many watch the TV—I observe little real faith in these faces toward the leaders speaking one after another—& maybe even a sadness—

she sits beside me—a new thing, wild & green—& awhile I do not know her name—she is young, burns with beauty & thriving heart—I do not recognize her in the easy ways—maybe this is OK for now—she approaches music, passing through me & I blow out with words & rhythms—serve the muse, this level's teaching—how bitterly hard, how choicelessly the path behind & ahead—

She looks at me a smile I suck softly at—more, I need more, more self, more world, more love, more spirit now—

"A lot of pain" I say to her she nods knows—

Sitting in a coffeehouse Seattle I met months ago & now departing for months again—a sense of home as verb something one experiences, now lesser, now greater—

leaving tomorrow by noon—home as travel, pursuit—the ancient in my life raised visibly again—what in them lives still strongly, what agreeably rests—

Lone figure fishing from a rowboat lake somewhere in central Washington State. Water blue beneath arch of blue. Bus passes on steadily. Fixtion travels, 22 years of it, & today still yet. My notebooks & I bound not for home but for origin. My heart is exhausted, nine months of sloppy Western rampage, tracking a gleam, forging a way. Soon to walk again where I've walked before yet I think maybe more to loosen old ties than renew them. Let go: create, continue.

To kneel before nothing, begin again, again, by any means necessary, fire, forgetfulness, every sacrifice freedom summons—

Art rules my land, all land, every why & every where, the only sure fuel & safety I have known—

Luna T's Cafe those who sip beer at its bar, those who puff cannabis, those who dwell inly, those who look about for an old or new friend—more than what it was, different, its life & lives roar again & newly—pages will still fill with crude stumblings but in this moment of afternoon shade & cloud & gleam a hope crushed within so long perhaps it uncrumples a patch here, & here—

I loved you with all my heart unto questing thousands of miles to see your face, present my vow—whatever comes, I was true to you, true to my faith—my heart is exhausted but will find its rhythm again, its accelerating heat—I did not falter or fail—my quest is completing what comes hereafter your response, whether I know it or not—

Embrace it all, let it go, see what remains: this one of my favorite thoughts, an instruction I believe in & try to live.

More colors. Wilder music. The beginnings of a new freedom. These words I love too how they gesture brightly toward hope & purpose, mysteries happy to exist & in time resolve. I'm hardly 200 miles & several hours into a journey 3000 miles & several days big. Why does hope greet me now, a child's birthday morning, a swirl of calling bodies inside a desert music frenzy?

Heart exhausted but hand busy, in time the two will join again. Twelve dollars to my name in this world, a loaf of homemade bread, chocolate, soda, a jar of peanut

butter. Notebooks & clothes & music. Friends to my fore & aft, & elsewhere. Above, within.

I carry this story & my sheaf of *Nocturnes*, companions now for several years & likely several more. We've traveled & suffered & loved. A beagle awaits my mind's turn as well. A man wheelchaired. Other kinds of things.

Returning to origin to embrace, let go, see what remains.

You'll pose for me, again & again, arch, stretch, cup, shape, together we will strum & stroke your power, raise your blush & your heat, madden your hunger & deeply feed it—

you'll pose for me & the worlds will implode & you'll laugh, tease & play, revealing more what growls dirty & potent among the shades of your desire—you'll seek to please me & I will let you in ways contrived to crazy you greater

you'll pose for me in lace, in colors, in bare skin, move about, let tongue or cheek or breast sing most & always watching my eyes, my hands, which thought next perhaps better or stranger or both

you'll pose for me until there is noone else until what you do most truly is pose for me, the world as is & to come, a way ours fired into life by your beauty & my music & our power

love . . . possession . . . mystery

dream . . . release . . .

She sits next to me at Luna T's Cafe's bar, dressed in pink halter top & blue jeans, sipping cherry cola to amuse me. Her hair down against her shoulders, her thoughts mild & focus flitting watches me writing & looking at her intensely, poses, relaxes, this is what I wish, I amuse her, I turn her on fiercely, she more accepts what I am doing that I do—

the TV news comes on & those with hookahs & those with steins alike turn to it

war days away—the Amerikan Empire ruled by a man & minions bloody roused for their fanatical mission—there is no ease in the reporting, no usual mainstream media disdain & cynicism—the King of Amerika waves a fist, & an obsessed countenance rakes his face—

Mr. Bob the barman turns off the TV & soon the jukebox is going—Rolling Stones awhile, *Let It Bleed*, *Sticky Fingers*—music to grapple despair by—

She's now in my lap where she belongs, resting against my chest, legs wrapped around my waist—I hold her, strum her, stroke her, the world matters so much but this matters too—

this imagining—this anticipation—this need for her to be with me & none else to say—

the bus cautiously runs along icy Montana roads, nearing midnight, still 2½ days journey & no doubt better than 2,000 miles—

I hold you—you belong to me—my girl—it is my work to please you, sing to you, lighten your path—it is yours to pose for me, laugh, blush, stay hours & days & years & long long fucking beauteous centuries in my arms where all desired between us arrives—

my exhausted heart will not quit this dream—crushed & crushed again, it revives, & rages forth again—I know little better now than before but you will come to me—my box & beyond will wait—wait a long time—I will have you in my arms & my music will become the fullest it can be at last—I will manifest, become our smiling we—you & my music shall make me new—

I sit alone in Billings, Montana Greyhound bus station—small, functional—grey lockers, old vending machines—a PacMan Galaga video game—I scored 80,000 on Galaga maybe first time ever since I played it 20 or so years ago—worn tile floors—snacks counter, ticket counter—many metal benches—soda machine—ads telling you to take th bus even as you likely are-

I think of you, traveling with you, like candy in hand versus this empty pocket—I've been alone far too much, it does not seem liberating or romantic to me often much anymore—mostly it feels like waiting which is no way to truly live—

20 hours traveled—52 remaining—they do pass—reading, scribbling, junkfood, *USA Today*—outside a hard cold, snowy scape, uninteresting streets—

have had no conversations on route yet—they'll come, maybe—what do I say when asked where I'm from? or bound?

from a dream, bound to Her, via my pen & notebooks—saying else is talk but no truth—

Sunken with some dream came the words: Ask the trees & I thought: that's the next level. Waiting in a few pages.

Luna T's Cafe opens out in back toward woods & mountains & further. To wherever I am even as I near it tonight. I have to leave the smiling girl to walk on my own where Luna T's goes. I need to ask the trees.

North Dakota ripples brownly hundreds of miles. Took over as Montana's snowy rock scape gave way. Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois to come in the next 24 hours. I live on this bus right now & into tomorrow—

Soon: Ask the trees. But still now: Serve the muse. Ever changes how, & its rewards, & its pains. Nearly as difficult simply to explain. Maybe moreso sometimes.

Arched back rises in dimly lit vault & I pray with fingers, lips, tongue. Black pen. The muse opens up to me, a blossoming within, but also what is beyond this, what I seek just as dearly. What I've not hardly viewed in a lifetime of try. Toward which I fly tonight with a map of songs, few coins, cascading black pen—

Devolve to a trio of remaining pages & a bad joke: I am sitting in the bus station in Hartford, Connecticut, nine months after I departed the East Coast for good.

Nothing jumps within or springs up from this circumstance, bus station on a cold snowy day. I've spent nearly 4 days getting here. Again: nothing. Soon to settle awhile into living here after 10½ years elsewhere. Nothing.

I don't know. Noise without melody. Nothing. Twice more & greater. Pen stupid stills.

We sit at the Peoples Donutshop first time in years, 5 6 7 years? I look at her, she nods, yes, she says, you're here, no, she says, it's not 1988 or 1992 or the 20th century

Another time. Another field of greens.
Another girl. Every time.

Here I am. Rebecca nods. My wife of six years. She blushes, for me. 23 going on 17, like me.

Embrace it all. Let it go. See what remains. Nothing? That would be too easy. Everything? That wouldn't be hard enough.

Full moons & new rhapsodies. Yes, of course. What else?

My pen much slumber last three weeks. Connecticut: origin. Home as yes & no as elsewhere.

something still, more words, more shine, boom blue fancy boom, a game, a cosmos, this one, that one, a dream, a somewhere, a crawling drunken man begs, begs, goes, gone—

They'll feed me here, give me a bed, listen. The memories bear no greater fist than I allow.

I walked around New Britain, Connecticut in spreading vision, a dumb shock, secret dismay, boiling noise this pen prosecutes to page

"Raymond"
"Who"
"Me"
"Why?"
"Nothing ever ends. You know that"
"What then"
"You never really understood the good or the bad"
"OK. Reason to break me?"
"You're not broken & I'm not gone."
"What next?"
"Nobody ever knows."

Less than a page & whatever any of this meant. Everything, nothing. The truth: something.

She kisses my cheek I no longer know who—a kiss, young lips, a carrot, a stick. Carrot, a stick.

A store yonder called Dollar Dreams
yes OK that's all most are.

A few pound harder, a deeper chasm,
greater fill.

I haven't written here in years.
It was an all night session last,
some other life.

Press on, faith & fury. Press on,
dance & dream. Press on, thwart
the gathering bastards.

Press on, fingers wild among the stars. Full moons & rhapsodies. Death a fake ending til it happens, & especially then.

To be continued in Cenacle | *61* | *April 2007*

E. E. Cummings

in time of daffodils(who know
the goal of living is to grow)
forgetting why,remember how

in time of lilacs who proclaim
the aim of waking is to dream,
remember so(forgetting seem)

in time of roses(who amaze
our now and here with paradise)
forgetting if,remember yes

in time of all sweet things beyond
whatever mind may comprehend,
remember seek(forgetting find)

and in a mystery to be
(when time from time shall set us free)
forgetting me,remember me

i thank You God for most this amazing
day:for the leaping greenly spirits of trees
and a blue true dream of sky;and for everything
which is natural which is infinite which is yes

(i who have died am alive again today,
and this is the sun's birthday;this is the birth
day of life and of love and wings:and of the gay
great happening illimitably earth)

how should tasting touching hearing seeing
breathing any—lifted from the no
of all nothing—human merely being
doubt unimaginable You?

(now the ears of my ears awake and
now the eyes of my eyes are opened)

the
sky
was
can dy lu
minous
edible
spry
pinks shy
lemons
greens coo l choc
olate
s.

un der,
a lo
co
mo
tive s pout
ing
vi
o
lets

being to timelessness as it's to time,
love did no more begin than love will end;
where nothing is to breathe to stroll to swim
love is the air the ocean and the land

(do lovers suffer?all divinities
proudly descending put on deathful flesh:
are lovers glad?only their smallest joy's
a universe emerging from a wish)

love is the voice under all silences,
the hope which has no opposite in fear;
the strength so strong mere force is feebleness:
the truth more first than sun more last than star

—do lovers love?why then to heaven with hell.
Whatever sages say and fools,all's well

when faces called flowers float out of the ground
and breathing is wishing and wishing is having—
but keeping is downward and doubting and never
—it's april(yes,april;my darling)it's spring!
yes the pretty birds frolic as spry as can fly
yes the little fish gambol as glad as can be
(yes the mountains are dancing together)

when every leaf opens without any sound
and wishing is having and having is giving—
but keeping is doting and nothing and nonsense
—alive;we're alive,dear:it's(kiss me now)spring!
now the pretty birds hover so she and so he
now the little fish quiver so you and so i
(now the mountains are dancing,the mountains)

when more than was lost has been found has been found
and having is giving and giving is living—
but keeping is darkness and winter and cringing
—it's spring(all our night becomes day)o,it's spring!
all the pretty birds dive to the heart of the sky
all the little fish climb through the mind of the sea
(all the mountains are dancing;are dancing)

a wind has blown the rain away and blown
the sky away and all the leaves away,
and the trees stand. I think i too have known
autumn too long

(and what have you to say,
wind wind wind—did you love somebody
and have you the petal of somewhere in your heart
pinched from dumb summer?
O crazy daddy
of death dance cruelly for us and start

the last leaf whirling in the final brain
of air!)Let us as we have seen see
doom's integration……a wind has blown the rain

away and the leaves and the sky and the
trees stand:
the trees stand. The trees,
suddenly wait against the moon's face.

"next to of course god america i
love you land of the pilgrims' and so forth oh
say can you see by the dawn's early my
country 'tis of centuries come and go
and are no more what of it we should worry
in every language even deafanddumb
thy sons acclaim your glorious name by gorry
by jingo by gee by gosh by gum
why talk of beauty what could be more beaut-
iful than these heroic happy dead
who rushed like lions to the roaring slaughter
they did not stop to think they died instead
then shall the voice of liberty be mute?"

He spoke. And drank rapidly a glass of water

lis
-ten

you know what i mean when
the first guy drops you know
everybody feels sick or
when they throw in a few gas
and the oh baby shrapnel
or my feet getting dim freezing or
up to your you know what in water or
with the bugs crawling right all up
all everywhere over you all me everyone
that's been there knows what
i mean a god damned lot of
people don't and never
never
will know,
they don't want

to
no

now does our world descend
the path to nothingness
(cruel now cancels kind;
friends turn to enemies)
therefore lament,my dream
and don a doer's doom

create is now contrive;
imagined,merely know
(freedom:what makes a slave)
therefore,my life,lie down
and more by most endure
all that you never were

hide,poor dishonoured mind
who thought yourself so wise;
and much could understand
concerning no and yes:
if they've become the same
it's time you unbecame

where climbing was and bright
is darkness and to fall
(now wrong's the only right
since brave are cowards all)
therefore despair,my heart
and die into the dirt

but from this endless end
of briefer each our bliss—
where seeing eyes go blind
(where lips forget to kiss)
where everything's nothing
—arise,my soul;and sing

you shall above all things be glad and young.
For if you're young,whatever life you wear

it will become you;and if you are glad
whatever's living will yourself become.
Girlboys may nothing more than boygirls need:
i can entirely her only love

whose any mystery makes every man's
flesh put space on;and his mind take off time

that you should ever think,may god forbid
and(in his mercy)your true lover spare:
for that way knowledge lies,the foetal grave
called progress,and negation's dead undoom.

I'd rather learn from one bird how to sing
than teach ten thousand stars how not to dance

may my heart always be open to little
birds who are the secrets of living
whatever they sing is better than to know
and if men should not hear them men are old

may my mind stroll about hungry
and fearless and thirsty and supple
and even if it's sunday may i be wrong
for whenever men are right they are not young

and may myself do nothing usefully
and love yourself so more than truly
there's never been quite such a fool who could fail
pulling all the sky over him with one smile

seeker of truth

follow no path
all paths lead where

truth is here

Raymond Soulard, Jr.

Notes from the Northwest

The following continues the series originally called Notes from New England*, begun in issue 24-25 (Winter 1998), and resumed after a long absence in issue 59 (October 2006). It is intended as a gathering-place for observations of various lengths upon the world around me. It will be culled, like much of my writing, from my notebooks, and perhaps these thoughts will be expanded upon sometimes as well.*

(U.S. Congressional Elections, November 7, 2006)—We have lived inside a five-year long nightmare only to wake up to the best politics could offer us up in a new dream. We have a new congress composed of all sorts of our people, a rainbow of opinions and backgrounds and passions. Capturing both the House and the Senate means that Bush is no longer King, no longer even a pretender to that fool's ambition. His bloated control on the government ended in the course of a very long day . . . a beautiful, terrifying day . . .

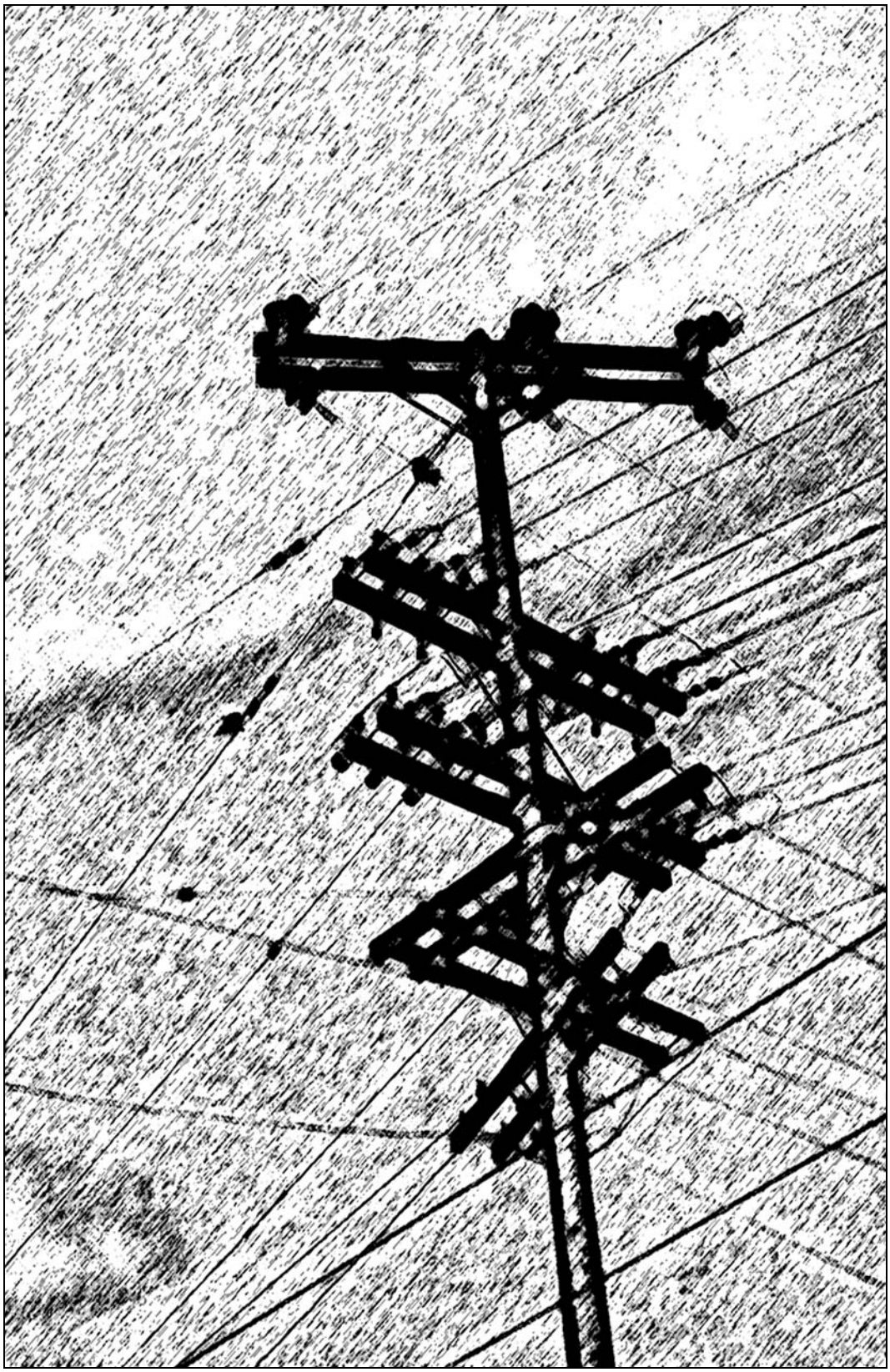
Terrified is how I feel. It's like a trust has been raised up between us and the new Democrats coming in, as well as the ones remaining in Congress. We want to believe in more than government again, we want to believe in EACH OTHER. We have pointed them toward what we want; now they have to make it happen. We have become great worshippers of the promise of the Constitution as we saw it cut to pieces by fascist petro-lunatics. Now is the time to get it right again.

Terrified because Bush is still there, still stupid, still an arrogant alpha male who truly does not believe that things have changed. Firing Rumsfeld was a gesture, someone told him to, probably Darth Cheney. He intends to keep his War, keep his belief that he is right, he is the Decider, the rest of us should go about our business.

Our business, Mr. Bush, is what you should be concerned with and, because you weren't, you are lamer a duck than has been witnessed in decades. Nobody will stand by you, nobody will recall in happiness these past five years, or tout their progress. Nobody. Not any person in the world.

You are alone tonight, Mr. Bush.

The rest of us? We're together, for this beautiful fucking moment, five years in the making, if not decades. Nobody knows what is going to happen. We're happy, we're blind, we're hopeful at last.



Jim DeRogatis

The Long, Strange Trip Continues

http://www.britannica.com/psychedelic/trip_main.html

Of rock 'n' roll's myriad genres, psychedelia may well be the hardest to get a grip on. Like punk music, it is a sound based largely on knocking down doors—or breaking on through to the other side, to quote Jim Morrison of the Doors (who borrowed the sentiment from novelist Aldous Huxley, who, in turn, drew inspiration from transcendent Romantic poet William Blake). Punk could at least be defined by the things that it negated, but at its best, psychedelic rock remains an ever-changing genre that refuses to accept any rules.

Nevertheless, the significance of these swirling and sometimes disorienting "head sounds" can be found by examining their evolution from the 1960s to the '90s and by going back to the roots of the word itself. (Contrary to nostalgic accounts, psychedelic rock did not begin and end in San Francisco during the 1967 Summer of Love.)

The term "psychedelic" originated in correspondence during the early 1950s between two pioneers in the study of psychoactive drugs: Humphrey Osmond, a British psychiatrist who studied the effects of mescaline and LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide; "acid") on alcoholics in Canada, and Huxley, the English author of *Brave New World* (1932) and *The Doors of Perception* (1954). These men needed a word to describe the effects of the drugs they themselves were taking, and Osmond suggested "psychedelic" from the Greek words *psyche* (soul or mind) and *delein* (to make manifest) or *deloun* (to show or reveal). He illustrated its use in a rhyme: "To fathom hell or soar angelic, just take a pinch of psychedelic."

From the beginning, scientists studying the effects of psychedelic drugs remarked on the way they enhanced the experience of listening to music, sometimes causing "synesthesia," or the illusion of seeing sounds as colors. Albert Hofmann, the Swiss chemist who first synthesized LSD, noted that under its influence, "every sound generated a vividly changing image with its own consistent form and color."

Describing an LSD experience in *The Joyous Cosmology* (1962), English-born philosopher Alan Watts wrote, "I am listening to the music of an organ; as leaves seemed to gesture, the organ seems quite literally to speak." And Harvard University professor-turned-acid-guru Timothy Leary claimed that while under the influence of psychedelic mushrooms, he "became every musical instrument." Users of hallucinogens also reported that music had the unique ability to conjure the drug experience long after the effects of the chemicals had worn off.

By the late 1950s and early '60s, legal psychedelic drugs were turning up in select circles of authors, artists, and psychiatrists in Los Angeles, New York City, and London. It was inevitable that musicians would experiment with them as well. A studio surf band called the Gamblers was the first rock combo to mention LSD on record. Their instrumental "LSD 25" was the B-side of "Moon Dawg," a 1960 single on the World Pacific label, but the twangy guitar and barrelhouse piano had nothing in common with what would later be considered psychedelic rock. Nor had "Hesitation Blues," a 1963 song by New York folk

musician Peter Stampfel, which may have been the first documented use of "psychedelic" in a lyric.

It wasn't until 1966 that the collision of rock and psychedelic drugs began to result in an exciting new style of popular music. Sparked by the soul-searching that followed his first encounter with LSD, Beach Boy Brian Wilson created the breathtaking *Pet Sounds* (1966). His rivals in the Beatles responded with *Revolver* (1966), which included "Tomorrow Never Knows," a song likewise inspired by John Lennon's first profound acid trip.

In Austin, Texas, Roky Erickson and his band debuted with an album entitled *The Psychedelic Sounds of the 13th Floor Elevators* (1966); its liner notes openly encouraged hallucinogenic experimentation. That year the Rolling Stones scored a hit with the mysterious, Eastern-tinged "Paint It Black." And though they maintained that it was about jet flight, the Los Angeles band the Byrds found their otherworldly single "Eight Miles High" blacklisted by radio programmers across the United States because of its alleged druggy subtext.

Many of these musicians spoke openly about using psychedelic drugs. But by 1966, these substances had been written about enough (often in alarmist terms), so that even teenagers in Middle America who'd never consumed anything more potent than a beer thought that they understood the hallucinogenic experience. In noisy, chaotic singles that would represent rock's first golden age of one-hit wonders, a wave of garage bands imitated British Invasion groups such as the Beatles and the Yardbirds, singing about "bad trips" that often involved careening out of control or losing one's mind.

In 1972 a sampling of lysergic chart-toppers from the 1960s—such as the Electric Prunes' "I Had Too Much to Dream (Last Night)," the Count Five's "Psychotic Reaction," the Seeds' "Pushin' Too Hard," and the Amboy Dukes' "Journey to the Center of the Mind"—would be collected by rock critic Lenny Kaye on an album called *Nuggets: Original Artyfacts from the First Psychedelic Era, 1965-1968*. It would prove hugely influential to the punk movement, illustrating how imagination and attitude were more important in rock than technical expertise.

Even as it blossomed in 1966, it was clear that the hallmarks of acid rock were more important than whether or not the musicians themselves had taken psychedelic drugs. These trademark sounds included circular, mandala-like song structures; sustained or droning melodies; a tendency to incorporate the trance-inducing instruments of other countries (the Indian sitar, the Javanese gamelan, the drums of Joujouka, and the didgeridoo of the Australian Aborigines); heavily altered instrumental sounds; reverb, echoes, and tape delays that created a sensation of vastness or eeriness; and layered mixes that rewarded repeated listenings (especially via headphones).

Rock 'n' roll had always been aimed at prompting a visceral reaction from the body. Here was a new type of rock music aimed at the head. It was Apollonian as well as Dionysian, and it encouraged listeners to transcend their surroundings while shaking their booties.

Rockers were aided in creating these sounds by concurrent advents in recording technology. Bands began to utilize multitrack recording, allowing them to overdub many instruments without having to perform everything live in one take. In addition, FM radio was coming of age in the United States as more stations adopted a free-form rock format, broadening their programming to allow the playing of longer album cuts.

As they grew more successful, artists were able to spend more time in the studio, and this gave birth to concept albums such as *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967), released by the Beatles during the height of the Summer of Love. The year 1967 also saw the

production of such timeless and ambitious rock records as *The Piper at the Gates of Dawn* by Pink Floyd, *The Velvet Underground and Nico* by the Velvet Underground, *Are You Experienced?* by the Jimi Hendrix Experience, *Da Capo* by Love, *Surrealistic Pillow* by the Jefferson Airplane, and the self-titled debut by the Grateful Dead.

Meanwhile, the children of the Baby Boom were beginning to celebrate a new youth-oriented counterculture—dubbed "hippie" by some—at extremely visible mass "happenings" such as the 14-Hour Technicolour Dream in London and the much-ballyhooed ongoing scene on the Haight-Ashbury in San Francisco. Leary issued his ill-considered call to "turn on, tune in, drop out," and LSD was officially outlawed in the United States. Inevitably, there was a backlash against the hype. The Haight produced as many tragic casualties as it opened minds, and cautionary tales—such as the drug-induced breakdowns of Pink Floyd co-founder Syd Barrett and the 13th Floor Elevators' Erickson—proliferated.

By the turn of the decade, many bands were returning to simpler, more stripped-down sounds (witness the 1968 offerings of *The Beatles* [the "White Album"] and the Stones's *Beggars Banquet*). But by no means did psychedelia come to an end. The genre continued to mutate and evolve, flourishing whenever musicians set out to create imaginative new worlds in the studio.

In the early 1970s, artists such as Brian Eno, the Barrett-less Pink Floyd, "space-rockers" Hawkwind, and German "Kraut-rock" groups such as Amon Düül II pioneered the use of analog synthesizers and expanded the notion of the recording studio as an instrument in and of itself on albums such as Eno's 1974 album *Taking Tiger Mountain (By Strategy)*, Pink Floyd's *Atom Heart Mother* (1970), Hawkwind's *Space Ritual* (1973), and Amon Düül II's *Phallus Dei* (1969).

At the same time, progressive rock bands such as Yes, Genesis, and Emerson, Lake and Palmer took advantage of the freedoms won during the first psychedelic era to make ever more complex, virtuosic, and fanciful concept albums, including *Close to the Edge* (1972), *The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway* (1974), and *Tarkus* (1971), respectively.

When the punk revolution ushered in a return to faster and louder rock in the late 1970s, echoes of psychedelia could be heard inartier groups such as Pere Ubu (*The Modern Dance*; 1978), Wire (*Chairs Missing*; 1978), and the Feelies (*Crazy Rhythms*; 1980).

In one of its handiest definitions, David Thomas of Pere Ubu called head rock "the cinematic music of the imagination." Like many musicians, he maintained that it was more of an approach toward making and recording music than a style of rock rooted in drugs or in any one era.

Of course, there were also the psychedelic revival bands, and they approached the genre with a much more literal devotion. Listening to such admittedly beguiling albums as *Sixteen Tambourines* (1982) by the Three O'Clock and *Emergency Third Rail Power Trip* (1983) by the Rain Parade (both members of the "paisley underground" scene of mid-1980s Los Angeles), as well as *Wonder Wonderful Wonderland* (1985) by Plasticland of Milwaukee, Wis., U.S., *Auntie Winnie Album* (1989) by England's Bevis Frond, and the work of British cult heroes Porcupine Tree, you'd be hard-pressed to prove they weren't recorded during the Summer of Love.

In the early 1990s, the explosion of techno and electronic dance music ushered in a new psychedelic rock based on a new psychedelic drug: MDMA (methylenedioxymethamphetamine), or "ecstasy." Young listeners consumed the substance (or acted as if they had) while grooving to the otherworldly throb of bass-heavy music at

late-night warehouse parties called "raves"—'90s updates of '60s happenings like the famed Acid Tests thrown by Ken Kesey and the Merry Pranksters.

Techno artists such as the Orb (*U.F.Orb*; 1992), Plastikman *(Sheet One*; 1994), Orbital (*Snivilisation*; 1994), and the Aphex Twin (*Selected Ambient Works Volume II*; 1994) further expanded the acid rock palette with inspired experimentation on the latest technology, including digital synthesizers and samplers.

These machines were also used by psychedelic rappers such as De La Soul *(3 Feet High and Rising*; 1989) and P.M. Dawn *(Of the Heart, of the Soul and of the Cross: The Utopian Experience*; 1991), who took hip-hop in directions far from the playgrounds of the Bronx where it was spawned. "To me, psychedelia is finding something tangible that you can hold on to in the unusual," said P.M. Dawn's Prince Be. "That's what any innovator does."

Some critics contended that by the 1990s everything that could be done with rock's familiar guitar, bass, and drums lineup had been done. They were proved wrong not only by grunge music but also by an acid rock underground that continued to produce evocative music. The British band My Bloody Valentine created a kaleidoscopic guitar sound on their hugely influential *Loveless* (1991) and Oklahoma City's Flaming Lips charted the landscape of whimsical new worlds on albums such as *Transmissions from the Satellite Heart* (1993) and *The Soft Bulletin* (1999).

A collective of independent bands from Ruston, La., known as the Elephant 6 Recording Company updated the spirit of *Pet Sounds* and *Revolver* for a new millennium. Among their notable works are *In the Aeroplane over the Sea* (1998) by Neutral Milk Hotel, *Music from the Unrealized Film Script, "Dusk at Cubist Castle"* (1996) by the Olivia Tremor Control, and *Tone Soul Evolution* (1997) by the Apples In Stereo. The British group Spiritualized, with *Ladies and Gentlemen We Are Floating in Space* (1997), explored the merger of Pink Floyd-style interstellar overdrives with free jazz and gospel music.

Gospel music, you ask? Yes, indeed. A final dimension of psychedelia, from the Greek etymology, is "soul-manifesting"—implying a spiritual dimension that is rarely voiced (though it is worth remembering that Brian Wilson spoke of writing "teenage symphonies to God"). By transcending the ordinary, psychedelic musicians and their listeners attempt to connect with something deeper, more profound, and more beautiful.

As Jerry Garcia, guru of the Grateful Dead, once said, "Rock 'n' roll provides what the church provided for in other generations." And no form of rock music attempts to nourish more souls than psychedelia.

Notes on Contributors

Ric Amante lives in Melrose, Massachusetts. His poetry last appeared *The Cenacle* | 59 | October 2006. We recently exchanged a series of phone messages and notes, our communications getting through but never live. Somehow this led me to remembering the night our friendship bonded at a drunken dandy Christmas party in Cambridge, Massachusetts some 13 years ago. But the heart knows its own time, Ric . . .

Jim Burke III lives in Hartford, Connecticut. His writing last appeared in *The Cenacle* | 56 | December 2005. I regret that he & I did not have a chance to meet up & sit down together in 2006. What one draws on with old friends is a bank of memories, comfort, sometimes even wisdom, found in kept nights of rage & sweet alike. It surely sums, and it surely comforts, & these days sometimes know more than those, & bloom better, if sometimes sadder . . .

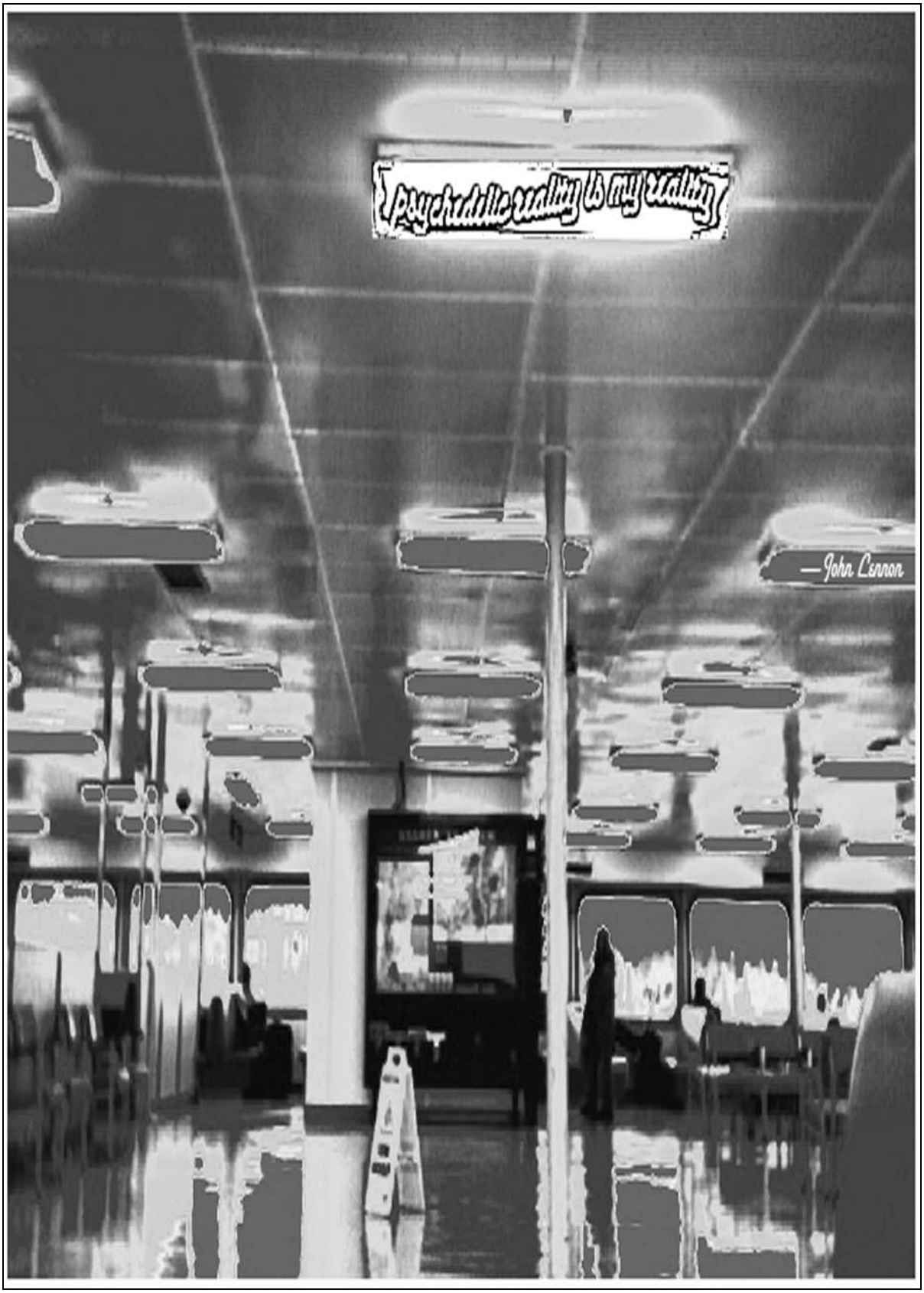
E. E. Cummings was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts on October 14, 1894, and died on September 3, 1962 in North Conway, New Hampshire. His poetry is some of the greatest English-language poetry of the 20th century, and also stands as some of the best experimental poetry ever written. In 2006, Scriptor Press featured a collection of his work, *All Paths Lead Where: Selected Poetry and Artwork of E. E. Cummings*, in the Burning Man Books series.

Jim DeRogatis was born in Jersey City, New Jersey in 1964. He has written articles for magazines such as *Spin*, *Guitar World*, and *Modern Drummer*. He is also a music critic for the *Chicago Sun-Times*. Among his books is *Turn On Your Mind : Four Decades of Great Psychedelic Rock*. His reprinted essay in this issue also appears in the 2006 Burning Man Books title *We Have Drunk the Soma: An Eighth Anthology of Writings About Psychedelics*.

Judih Haggai lives at Kibbutz Nir Oz in Israel. Her poetry last appeared *The Cenacle* | 59 | October 2006. I think she works too hard, but I suspect that in work she finds at least some of her content and, being that she is a teacher, this is not surprising. Whenever I see a new poem of hers, I get excited, for I know that poems are her reports from the hidden crevasses within, news always worth getting.

Kassandra Soulard lives in Seattle, Washington where she finds beauty in nature, in music, & in the obscure moments & places of her days. She attends Antioch University but soon will finish with that & be ready to move on to some other escapade. There are people who get better with time, & reward those who know them through years. She is such a person.

Raymond Soulard, Jr. lives in Seattle, Washington, & is butt-ugly glad to be finishing this issue & moving along into the next year of publishing projects. The sentimental streak I elude rouses up a memory of typing a *Notes on Contributors* too many years ago to name, on an electronic typewriter, in a far gone apartment on a night of no sleep, & soon setting off with *Cenacle*s in hand to give to friends. Time, that fat furry fucker . . .


Psychedelic reality is my reality
—John Lennon

WAR
IS
OVER!
IF YOU WANT IT
Happy Christmas from John & Yoko